Thursday, February 2, 2012 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 27 / No. 56 P18 | Mobile Alerts: Text INQ ON BREAKING to 4467 | www.inquirer.net Twitter: @inquirerdotnet | Philippine Inquirer Libraries Twitter: @inqlibraries

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

AMAZING GRACE A publicity shot of Grace Lee who also confirms in a TV interview that she and the President are dating.

HAND OVER HEART, HEAD OVER HEELS? President Aquino stands at attention as the national anthem is played during the 25th anniversary of the Philippine Information Agency on Wednesday in Quezon City. The President admits for the first time that he is dating Korean radio-TV celebrity Grace Lee but he also invokes his right to privacy. MALC NAVARRO

CJ got ₱11-M cash from 'dead' firm

Prosecution: Wife's family firm closed in '03

By Christian V. Esguerra, TJ Burgonio and Cathy C. Yamsuan

PROSECUTORS yesterday zeroed in on what one senator-judge described as an "unexplained inclusion" in the statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALNs) of Chief Justice Renato Corona.

On Day 10 of Corona's impeachment trial, the prosecution contended that the Chief Justice could not have received an ₱11-million cash advance from a company owned by his wife's family in 2003 because its certificate of registration was revoked that same year.

"Our theory is that there could not have been any transaction made by Basa-Guidote (Enterprises Inc.) with Chief Justice Renato Corona because ... the corporate franchise had already been dissolved or re-

CJ GOT, A11

President denies sending emissary to Caevas / A13

• Lito Lapid questioned floors prosecution / A12

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given to the public, and particularly to the tenants of the BASA-GUIDOTE BUILDING located at the corner of Legarda and J. Figueroa Sts., Sampaloc, Manila, that the undersigned, majority Stockholder of BASA-GUIDOTE ENTERPRISES, INC., has filed a CRIMINAL COMPLAINT for ESTAFA against MS. CRISTINA ROCO-CORONA for misappropriating the proceeds of rentals due to said BASA-GUIDOTE ENTERPRISES, INC. Said case is now docketed as U.S. Case No. 968-17575 of the City Prosecutor's Office of Manila.

The tenants of BASA-GUIDOTE ENTERPRISES INC., are further forewarned that in the light of this controversy, it would be best for them to ensure that their rental payments would be properly credited in their by remitting their rental payments in trust or depositing the same in a bank account in trust for BASA-GUIDOTE ENTERPRISES, INC.

Please be guided accordingly.

JOSE MA. BASA III
Majority Stockholder and
Complainant in the Derivative Suit
filed for and in behalf of
BASA-GUIDOTE ENTERPRISES, INC

Assisted by

THE
LAW FIRM
OF
CHAN ROBLES AND ASSOCIATES
21st Floor, Philippine Stock Exchange Center
Tektite Tower I, Exchange Road
Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Metro Manila

INVITATION

"NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC" appeared in the Classifieds section of the June 6, 1995, issue of the Inquirer.

Defense opposes subpoena on banks

By Marlon Ramos

IS WINNING a raffle draw an impeachable offense?

Lawyers of Chief Justice Renato Corona yesterday raised this question as it opposed the request of prosecutors from the House of Representatives for the Senate impeachment court to subpoena two banks to bring documents pertaining to accounts that Corona and his wife purportedly owned.

The prosecutors claimed that Corona's account was P3 million in Philippine Savings Bank's "Monthly Millions" raffle draw and that the Chief Justice had time deposits, money market placements and dollar accounts in the bank.

DEFENSE, A11

PSBank cites bank secrecy law / A13

From 'Coke Zero' to kimchi: P-Noy dating Korean

By Norman Bordadora

FROM "Coke Zero" to kimchi.

Months after comparing his love life—or lack of it—to sugar-free cola, President Aquino yesterday admitted dating TV and radio personality Grace Lee, a Korean national who has found a niche in the local entertainment scene.

It was the first time the bachelor leader publicly and categorically confirmed he was

FROM CORE, A4

P-Noy: Llamas stays but expect sanctions

By Norman Bordadora

IT APPEARS that Ronald Llamas remains secure in his job as President Aquino's adviser on political affairs even after he was photographed buying pirated DVDs at a Quezon City mall last week.

No less than Mr. Aquino said that Llamas continued to have his trust and confidence, adding that the latter's perceived offense wasn't related to his core functions in the administration.

"He still performs the role that he was brought into the Cabinet for. So, therefore, he does enjoy the trust," the President said in an interview with reporters yesterday.

Mr. Aquino confirmed that Llamas apologized to him on Friday in connection with the gaffe that would undermine the government's antipiracy campaign.

The President, however, indicated that sanctions would still

P-NOY, A4

Rights group: Army coddling Palparan

By Leila B. Salaverria in Manila and Tonette Orejas Inquirer Central Luzon

THE FUGITIVE Jovito Palparan may be under the protection of Armed Forces personnel and business owners, and President Aquino should order the military to help arrest him, an international human rights group said yesterday.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a statement there were appreciations as well that the military could be interfering in the civilian judicial process, as indicated by the transfer to military custody of two of the suspected of the retired major general tagged by activists as "Butcher" (Butcher).

"President Aquino should get the message to the military that the years of protecting Palparan for grievous abuses are over," HRW deputy Asia director

RIGHTS, A6

Mike A lawyer is Palparan's counsel / A6

Prosecution blindsided by witness' appearance

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE PROSECUTION was caught off guard on Tuesday when an executive of property developer Megaworld Corp. appeared at the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona.

Neil Hernandez, Megaworld senior vice president for marketing and sales, had been subpoenaed by the Senate impeachment court, but the

PROSECUTION, A12

Erap: Finish the trial for closure • Reduction or discount, CJ's Bellagio purchase unethical / A12

BUSINESS
PSALM pursues $3.4-M claim vs bankrupt Lehman / B3

NEWS
Court rules Banco Filipino closure illegal / A2

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Romney to Obama: Get out of the way / A21

METRO
Oil leak cleanup in West Tower worries expert / A19

WORLD
New audio tape on JFK slay found / A21

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Banco Filipino ordered reopened

FIXING A HOLE IN THE WALL
Workers rush to fix the damaged seawall on Roxas Boulevard before the next typhoon. Storm surges from the Manila Bay spawned by Typhoon "Pedring" damaged the seawall last January. STORY ON PAGE A3

Appeals court orders BSP to grant P25-B assistance

By Jerome Aning

THE COURT of Appeals yesterday ordered the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to reopen Banco Filipino (BF) Savings and Mortgage Bank and to extend to it within 30 days state financial assistance worth more than P25 billion.

The appellate court's former Special 14th Division ruled that respondent BSP Monetary Board (MB) and the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) committed grave abuse of discretion and violated BF's right to due process when they implemented MB Resolution 272, it on March 17, 2010 which placed the bank under receivership and barred it from continuing its business operations in the country due to "unsound banking practices."

"The BSP and the MB are hereby ordered to reopen Banco Filipino Savings and Mortgage Bank and direct it to continue business in the Philippines under the comptrollership of the BSP and the MB, compliance with viable rehabilitation plan, in order to ensure fast and immediate recovery of the funds from the ill-effects of the illegal closure," read the decision, penned by Justice Agnes Reyes-Carpio.

Unanimous decision

Concurring with the ruling were Justices Vicente Veloso and Normandie Pizarro.

The court directed the BSP and MB to extend financial support to BF by paying up a special liquidity fund equivalent to its deposit liabilities net of those to enable it to service expected heavy withdrawals when it reopens. If BSP (complainee there) has opposed the issuance of the writ, it said.

"The challenge is for this court to give a clear and particular direction to the reopening and reorganization of BF, with the objective that it be reopened in such a manner that it can continue with its business with safety and confidence to its creditors, depositors and the general public and at the same time preventing a repetition of that case that itself once around," it said.

BF stockholders had gone to the appellate court questioning the legality of the BSP's order to close the bank in March 2011, and placed it under the receivership of state-run Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC), seeking its liquidation capped its assets by P8.4 billion.

Insufficient assets

The BSP's policy-setting MB, in its Resolution 272-it, supposedly the findings of its Integrated Supervision Department I that the BF was unable to pay its P4.5 billion or then become due, had insufficient realizable assets to meet its liabilities and could not continue its business without resolving probable losses to its depositors and creditors.

The MB also barred BF from conducting its operations and placed its assets and affairs under receivership.

BF stockholders, in their petition, insisted that BF did not have a negative net asset value and that its total assets exceeded its liabilities by around P2.6 billion.

They noted that the total appraised value of the bank's real properties amounted to P37.89 billion and that its deposit liabilities only amounted to P34.9-billion.

In yesterday's decision, the appellate court held that the bank would not have been declared insolvent and ineligible for an emergency loan had the MB exercised caution.

The appellate court noted that before the bank's closure, the business plan agreed by the BSP, BF and BF which provided for the grant of a P25-billion emergency loan, was already up for approval.

No advance notice

The court also gave credence to the appointed report prepared by the Sycip Gorres, Velayo and Consultancy Firm in compliance with the directive of the House of Representatives committee on banks and financial intermediaries contradicting the MB's findings that BF was already insolvent.

It noted that one of the MB's members, lawyer Nelly Beth Villafuerte, even asked for a reconsideration of the decision to declare BF insolvent considering that the bank was not given advance notice of findings one month prior to its closure thereof.

"In person to this case, haste makes waste. Had respondents BSP and MB exercised due diligence, depositors and creditors would have been spared from the agony and the nightmare this case had caused. They could have given BF reasonable time to rehabilitate and develop viable and serious measures," the appellate court said.

The appellate court also gave credence to BF's claim that it could not have committed unsound banking practices considering that it was practically co-managed by the BSP through the latter's assigned comptroller.

Gov't to continue fuel subsidies to transport groups

By Christine O. Avendaño

TO GIVE some relief to transport groups reeling from high oil prices, President Aquino yesterday announced a number of measures that include continuing with subsidies and fuel discounts for jeepney and tricycle operators.

The President said he was ready to impose price controls, if necessary.

Mr. Aquino also issued a stern and "last" warning to "volumizer" bus operators to stop operating or their buses will be impounded.

Speaking on reporters after attending the 25th anniversary of the Philippine Information Agency yesterday, Mr. Aquino said the Department of Energy will have their crude prices have gone up but "not as severe" as last year.

He said the government was targeting to buffer supply to last 30 days from the previous 24-and-a-half days.

The President said he was planning to seek a dialog with transport groups but only to report to them what has happened in the negotiations instead up during their first meeting in September last year, including the groups' concern about the continued operation of "volumizer" buses in their routes.

He said he was threatening a "last warning" to volumize bus operators.

"I have asked authorities to look for all of you jodoxists operations and your buses to be impounded so that traffic can be eased and so that there will be not much congestion which has made life difficult for the transport sector. Let's follow what is right, in accordance with the law," Mr. Aquino said.

The President said the government would also update the transport leaders on their concerns against traffic enforcers and policemen extorting money from public transport drivers.

Mr. Aquino said the government would continue the "Pantawid Pasada" program under which jeepney and tricycle operators with franchises get subsidies or fuel discounts.

He said there was no need for additional funding for the program as the government still has P300 million left from the earlier round of fuel discounts.

He said the government still has funds left because the program only covered 100,000 tricycles and jeepney drivers from the targeted 200,000.

Mr. Aquino also said that he has asked for a mechanism to be established where manufacturers of spare parts and even those selling fuel would sell to transport groups directly.

Armed men seize 3 bird watchers in Tawi-Tawi

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Heavily armed men abducted two foreigners and a Filipino on a bird watching tour in Panglima Sugala town in Tawi-Tawi at noon yesterday, police said.

Chief Supt. Bienvenido Latag, police chief for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, identified the victims as Ekaterhl Horn, 52, from Holland; Leonida Vitogan-ria, 47, from Switzerland; and their tourist guide, Ivan Sadjan, who is based in Davao City.

Gov. Sadikul Sahali said the three were on their way back to the mainland on a boat with a policeman, a barangay council man and the boat operator when they were intercepted by five gunmen on another boat off Bilis Look-Look in Barangay Bitongan.

The gunmen ordered the victims' companions of the victims to jump off the boat, Sahali said.

Latag could not say who were behind the abduction.

Sahali said the two foreigners and their guide had been staying in Panglima Sugala for the past two weeks to bird watching activities.

"The foreigners were interested in various birds species in Panglima Sugala because it was only there that they saw some endangered species," he said.

Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

Bureau of Fisheries to go after 'galunggong' imports

By Leila B. Salaverria

IMPORTED galunggong cannot only be manufacturers are making their way into local markets and are competing with local counterparts, but the Undersecretary Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is being pressed to confiscate them.

BFAR Director Asis Perez said importers should be held liable for diverting their imported galunggong (round scad) and other fish to the markets.

The BFAR has the authority to go after the importers but not to penalize the vendors of the imported fish, he said.

According to Perez, most of the fish imported into the country are only meant for processing. Almost 600 tons of fish were imported into the country last year.

Not for wet markets

"Importers are supposed to use imported fish only in their own facilities, either they supply canneries or plants, or institutional buyers like restaurants. It is prohibited in their franchise or permit to sell or divert these to the wet markets," he said reporters.

The purpose of this is to protect local producers, who may be forced to reduce their prices. But he noted that despite the provisions of importation, fish is not markets, it seems that the price of galunggong has not been affected much and has even been rising.

He said consumers won't be able to differentiate between the imported and local galunggong since they look alike.

Perez said that while the BFAR is tasked with going after importers who divert the items to wet markets, its 1,200 personnel are not enough to cover the vast areas under its jurisdiction.

"We have the responsibility, but capacity-wise, we are not to fully regulations are ignoring," he said.

The BFAR needs at least 2,000 more personnel, especially considering that the actual coverage of the country is 2.2 million square kilometers.

There are now proposals to put a cap on the amount of fish that would be allowed to be imported into the country, said Perez. At present, there is no limit to how much fish would be allowed to come in.

"So long as there are phytosanitary inspections, they can come in. That is why we want to put a quota, a cap," he said.

The importation of fish, which has come to include the poor man's galunggong, was due to the depletion of supply in the country.

Asks said in a press conference yesterday that the country is showing signs of overfishing, though he was "not yet declaring we are overfished."

But he said the BFAR has also stepped up its projects for 2011 that would be expected to improve supply.

One is a massive mangrove reforestation program. The mangroves would provide both habitat and food to marine life, Perez said. He said BFAR plans to plant 100 million mangroves from to three years, in partnership with state colleges and universities.

BFAR will also put up multi-species hatchery facilities where marine life could be brought to breed.

Lawmaking, economy suffer amid impeach trial

By Gil Cabacungan

CONGRESS' fixation on the impeachment of Chief Justice Renato Corona is making its toll on its legislative work and the government's management of the economy.

While the national growth has plunged to 5.7 percent last year, which is much slower than the 7.6 percent gross domestic product (GDP) expansion in 2010, and the number of hungry Filipinos has escalated to 4.5 M from 4.3 M last September, the Aquino administration has marshaled its time and resources to an agenda of ousting the Chief Justice," said Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman.

Since the start of the trial in Jan. 16, Lagman noted that lawmaking at the Batasan has stagnated as attendance in the committee hearings and plenary session has plummeted to less than the required quorums.

Lagman said that the impeachment should continue "unfazed, unintimidated and biased publicity" because the public has been pressing politicians to deal with the hunger and unemployment rather than watch the alleged high profile transgressions of the ultra-affluent.

"The Aquino administration must meaningfully and immediately address these social concerns of small Filipinos rather than cheer its time, passion and resources to an agenda of prosecution which will not uplift and empower the greater number," said Lagman.

Minority Leader Danilo Suarez said it has become imperative for Congress to revive its oversight committee which would track inefficient government agencies.

Gov't text message system launched

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT Aquino yesterday launched a government-wide text messaging system to speed up the dissemination of presidential declarations, information on government properties, weather updates and disaster warnings to 130,000 responders per province nationwide.

Mr. Aquino was the first to send a message via the Philippine Information Agency's Information Text Broadcasting project of the PIA and the three-year Telecommunications Commission with mobile networks Globe and Smart Communications.

"With this project, we will become text mates with many of our countrymen as regards important information that they have to know," President Aquino said during the launch of PIA's text blast system during the agency's 25th anniversary yesterday.

Text blast

Lawyer Jose Rhizo, director general of the Philippine Information Agency said it would be up to the PIAs "have multiplier" in their regions to further spread the text messages to the rest of the public in their respective areas.

Rhizo said text blast messages would contain items such as presidential proclamations, updates on advisories on weather and disaster situations, government programs and services and news advisories.

Aside from the text blast project, President Aquino also inaugurated the PIA's new website and its art gallery that would feature works by students from tertiary education institutions in Metro Manila.

In his speech, President Aquino said the PIA's mandate was not to make the government look good but to inform the people so they would be able to make an informed decision when the need arises.

"When martial law was declared, there came to be a Ministry of Information. To those who would admit that they are of my age, we know that we didn't get any information from the Ministry of Information," President Aquino said, citing the then minister's role in censoring the various media.

Bishop urges vigilance vs RH bill

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DUMPTY, announcement by Congress that the reproductive health (RH) bill was no longer its priority, at least for the next couple of months, is Catholic bishop encouraged advocates against the measure to be vigilant.

"Although it is good news to us Catholics against the RH bill, we should be cautious because they might still work on it in subtle ways," said Tagbilaran Bishop Leonardo Medroso over Church-run Radio Veritas yesterday.

Medroso said the Catholic faithful and lawmakers against the family-planning bill must not stop campaigning against the legislative measure.

"In final it would soon be routinely passed."

The RH bill calls for sex education in schools and mandates government health workers to provide information on the use of artificial contraceptives.

"I hope our pro-life congressmen will be vigilant because other representatives might work on it behind our backs," said Medroso.

In a recent letter sent to fellow lawmakers, House Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. did not include bills on the reproductive health and freedom of information in the 45 priority measures Congress needed to approve before it adjourns in March.

But the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation Inc. (PLCPD) said it wasn't worried about it being sidelined or "lost a priority."

The advocacy group yesterday said the bill was now included in the plenary calendar. "Even the Speaker himself said the 'priority' label is unimportant because what is really critical is that the bill is moving to the plenary," according to PLCPD executive director Ramon Jose Secaca.

The Catholic Church has staunchly opposed the bill, saying that it promotes abortion, which is against its teachings.

Proponents, on the other hand, say the bill is in line with country commitments to human rights and family planning.

Correction

IN THE MA. ST. PAUL, an obituary on Page A13... Theodicus C. Tuiten, 49th... misstated the cause of his death. Jonathan Cuaderno Tuiten succumbed to cardiomyopathy, not myocarditis, as the first sentence of the obituary stated.

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors in writing to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, 8th Floor, Media Center Building, Chino Roces Avenue Corner Maria Orosa Street, Makati City, Metro Manila, 1207 (fax: 897-8703; e-mail: customercare@inquirer.com.ph).

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Coco levy funds only for benefit of farmers–SC

By Jerome Aning

THE SUPREME Court (SC) dismissed allegations the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court's decision awarding to the government the 24-percent San Miguel Corp. (SMC) shares that were bought with coconut levy funds also required the government to use its share only for the benefit of the farmers and the coconut industry.

According to the Jan. 24 high-court decision that was posted early this week on the Supreme Court website, the six Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) corporations, their 14 holding firms, and the 33.1 million shares in the SMC that they acquired "are declared to be owned by the government to be used only for the benefit of all coconut farmers and for the development of the coconut industry, and ordered reconveyed to the government."

2 modifications

This was one of the two modifications made by the high court on the Sandiganbayan's twin decisions in July 2003 and May 2006 that settled the sixth installment of the anti-graft court's forfeiture case filed by the government under the CIIF and its holding companies and held in trust for coconut farmers.

The ruling answered questions by critics, including Sen. Joker Arroyo, on whether the shares would go to the government or the farmers.

The high court modified the Sandiganbayan ruling declaring as unconstitutional President Joe Ejercito No. 755 issued by the dictator President Marcos that authorized the Philippine Coconut Authority to use funds collected from the coconut levy to buy a bank "for the benefit of the coconut farmers."

This bank was the First United Bank, later renamed United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB), whose president and chief executive officer was businessman Edmundo Cojuangco Jr., appointed by Marcos as administrator of the coco levy funds that were collected from the country's coconut farmers at a tax between 1971 and 1982.

Only the portion of the decree that authorized the Philippine Coconut Authority "to buy shares of stock of the bank is acquired in the coconut farmers under such rules and regulations it may promulgate" was nullified by the high court for being unconstitutional.

Ruling on 3 cases

The decision, however, resolved only three cases involving the coco levy funds that had been consolidated.

The high court ruled that the fourth case that had been joined in the three for the past few years—which involved questions relating to Cojuangco's ownership of the UCPB shares that he allegedly received as up-front shares—would be resolved separately.

The government declared that the UCPB, using the coco levy funds, bought the CIIF companies, which, in turn bought 47 percent of SMC.

The 24-percent block of shares was part of the 47 percent block of SMC shares sequestered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government on suspicion that these were acquired illegally by Marcos and his associates using the coco levy funds.

The government declared that Cojuangco, as administrator of the coco levy, acquired the CIIF companies and the UCPB using the coco levy funds.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday - February 2, 2012
Presentation of the Lord

1st Reading: Mal 3:1-4

Thus I am sending my messenger ahead of me to clear the way; then suddenly the Lord for whom you long will enter the sanctuary. The envoy of the covenant which you so greatly desire already comes, says Yahweh of hosts. Who can bear the day of his coming and remain standing when he appears? For he will be like fire in the foundry and like the fuller's sand for bleaching.

He will sit as a refiner or a fuller, he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, for Yahweh will have priests who will present the offering as it should be. Then Yahweh will accept with pleasure the sacrificing of Judah and Jerusalem, as he formerly did, in the years long past.

2nd Reading: Heb 2:14-18

And because all these children share one same nature of flesh and blood, Jesus likewise had to share this nature. This is why he shall destroy(e) the one holding the power of death, that is the devil, and free(f) those who remained in bondage all their lifetime because of the fear of death.

Jesus came to take by the hand not the angels but the human race. As he had to be like his brothers and sisters in every respect, in order to be their high priest merciful and worthy of confidence in relation to God, able to make expiation for the sins of the people. Having been tested through suffering, he is able to help those who are tested.

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40 or Luke 2:22-32

When the day came for the purification according to the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary brought the baby up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: Every firstborn male shall be consecrated to God. And they offered a sacrifice as ordered in the law of the Lord: a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

There lived in Jerusalem at this time a very upright and devout man named Simeon; the Holy Spirit was in him. He looked forward to the time when the Lord would redeem Israel, and he had been assured by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Messiah of the Lord. So he was led into the Temple by the Holy Spirit; and when the parents brought the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law,

Simeon took the child in his arms and blessed God, saying, "Now, O Lord, you can dismiss your servant in peace, for my eyes have fulfilled your word and my eyes have seen your salvation, which you display for all the people to see,

"the light you will reveal to the nations and the glory of your people Israel."

Reflection:

The birth of any old person's life is in the past, and as we square him or her with all in the past and somehow see if such with the present, and still more with the future. But for Simeon and Anna, they had seen to recognize the new thing when they saw it. They had the patience of mind and spirit that genuinely saintly people have. And people the ones set on it on the outside. Inside they are younger than any of us!

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Cesar Montano appointed to Optical Media Board

By Herman Bordadora

PRESIDENT Aquino has appointed actor Cesar Montano to the Optical Media Board (OMB).

The actor, who ran for the Senate in 2007, was appointed as a private sector representative from an industry relating to intellectual property protection.

Montano was appointed to a term expiring on March 1, 2013. He replaced John Philip Lenon.

President Aquino also appointed Senator Shirlend Custodio to the Culture and Arts committee. Elaine Ingles is the OMB.

Ingles, who's also the executive director of the Organizing on eg. Filipinong Muog-aawit, was appointed to the OMB as the representative of consumer organizations.

Ingles was appointed to a term expiring on June 7, 2013. He replaced Maria Trinidad Hilario.

Montano was a special envoy for art, culture and film digital and was a commissioner in the Veteran's national commission of the Philippines.

The board is headed by executive secy. Ronaldo Puyadeo.

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From 'Coke Zero' to kimchi: P-Noy dating Korean

From page A1

THE GOOD TIMES President Aquino greets co-star Bona after an interview to Good Times (3) Grace Lee of Magic 89.9's Pinkcasting last December

evening ourselves, a pre-Valentine celebration also picked up by the South Korea media.

Lee Young Hee (an oft-used nickname) and joined in local but fast since been "Filipinized" (to use a term in her profile on the GMA Network website) after moving to the Philippines at age 10 because of her father's business.

She went to high school at St. Paul College in Pasig City and earned degrees in interior design and fashion at Adamson University (AdU).

Mr. Aquino made the revelation after social networking sites went abuzz over reports that Lee had acted bonbon on her morning radio show that she went out with the President the night before.

"Well, we're not supposed to talk about it," President Aquino said with a wry smile when asked about the real score behind the end of a years' bonding on Wednesday morning at the lobby of the Philippine Information Agency office in Quezon City.

The audience erupted into cheers upon hearing the question and minutes after they got the answer from the President, who said the morale boost aging one's newly unveiled love meant.

Article 2

President Aquino, who turns 52 next week, declined to take further questions about the date with Lee. He:

"I think I'll stop at that," he said. "In the Constitution, there's a thing called a treaty. Perhaps, I can also enjoy that right under Article I."

A couple of hours later, Lee confirmed President Aquino's declaration when asked by a fellow anchor on a Q&A noontime news program.

"What the President said is true," said a beaming Lee, who had just delivered the program's closing segment.

Like her date, she also shied away from further queries. "I think there's no room for clarification because what the President said was enough," she said.

On her 98 radio show last week, Lee earlier denied any romantic involvement, she and Mr. Aquino were seeing each other, saying she would rather not comment out of respect for the President.

Early hints

In what now seems to be Lee's subtle hints, her chosen dinner-in-the-making, President Aquino acted off-script in a speech and described Lee as gorgeous (really, all the inauguration of a new airport in Cebu in the middle of last June Lee was there as part of the program).

Later in December and year, the President greeted Lee a star-in-memoriam on Valentine's day.

In Lee's native land, The Korea Times on Wednesday carried a story with the headline "Is Filipino president in love with Korean actress?"

"Philippine-Korean relations have suddenly gotten romantic," an Associated Press report said on what could be a budding Palace romance, which appeared in the news a week after the President's former girlfriend, Federation Councilor Shalani Soledad, tied the knot with Pasig Rep. Roman Romulo.

Mr. Aquino and Soledad ended a two-year relationship shortly after he announced his presidential bid in June 2009, after which the latter will tie knot before the Presidential Inauguration minute stylist Lil Li, model-trainer Lara Quigaman and Bianca Gubia. **With a report from AP**

P-Noy: Llamas stays as political adviser but expect sanctions

From page A1

for forthcoming against his political adviser after a Malacañang panel dealt here for alleged possession of the purchase of backlogged videos.

"It is not connected with his core function but, knowing said that, there are still sanctions that should be levied," Mr. Aquino said.

He indicated that some with the issue of his buying pirated DVDs, Llamas earlier said to update him about "ongoing activities and operations."

Asked what her Llamas spoke-played during their meeting on Friday, the President said, "That's part of it."

"And there were updates on so many things that I am not at liberty at this time to discuss. There are ongoing activities and operations, Mr. Aquino said.

Not a crime

On the possible sanctions against Llamas, Mr. Aquino said the restraint he had to allow overzealous Llamas' purchase of DVDs would subside in excessive-mediation measures. Under Philippine law, buying a pirated CD or DVD is not a crime, but selling is.

After keeping his power on the matter for a week after he was photographed sifting through backlogged discs, Llamas on Monday apologized to the administration "for any ill-advised unintended unfortunate consequences."

He promised to "exercise more care and prudence" henceforth.

Llamas said he had also apologized to the President "for the impropriety and lack of discretion as well as the unintended embarrassment this may have caused the administration."

"I didn't mind the power nor to expect its energy over a respectful manner and I will submit to the process that was done first and I am ready to face the findings and recommendations of the inquiry," Llamas said.

Mr. Aquino earlier said he would ask Llamas what he was doing at the Quezon City mall when Inquirer Readers online from Palawar took his picture while he appeared to be rummaging through pirated DVDs on Jan. 29.

The President, however, said that the latter cooked love on his presidency, citing the necessity of several crimes such as the bomb blast in Makati City and the killing of fishermen in Zamboanga province.

Rights group: Army coddling Palparan

From page A1

Elaine Pearson said in the statement.

"Officers and soldiers alike should be on notice that if they block civilian authorities in arresting Palparan, they too will be in [the] commanders," Pearson said.

Palparan is charged with kidnapping and serious illegal detention for the disappearance of University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño in 2006.

Pearson said he will slow that the Aquino administration is taking the Philippines in a new direction, according to Pearson.

"Palparan has become a symbol of the widespread lack of accountability for atrocities in the Philippines today," she said.

Powerful backers

HRW observed that the P1-million bounty put up by the panel's captain had not led to his arrest. It said in addition had conveyed suspicion that the fugitive had powerful backers.

"Civilian officials have told us that they believe some military personnel and business owners, who benefited from Palparan's campaign against the communist New People's Army, are protecting the retired general," HRW said.

It also noted that a group of active and retired military officers had come out to defend Palparan and to insist what it called his "trial by publicity."

The group had warned of civilians' demonstrations, saying that the abuses attributed to Palparan occurred during counterinsurgency operations.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin could not be reached for comment on HRW's statement.

Burgos said the head of the AFP Human Rights Office, Col. Dominge Tobias, would meet with representatives of HRW on Friday.

Burgos pointed out the Army was quick to turn over Palparan's command, Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado and Staff Sgt. Edgardo Osorio, to the custody of the Philippine National Police when Judge Geraldine of the Regional Trial Court in Malolos, Bulacan province, issued the arrest warrants.

"Since they are in the active service, we facilitated their turnover to the authorities. But in the case of those no longer in the service, it will be hard," he said.

But HRW pointed out that the Regional Trial Court had quickly granted the motion by the transfer of Anotado and Osorio from police to military custody.

Justice Secretary Leila de Lima has expressed outrage over the move. Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said the lawyer only had permission for the transfer on behalf of an unnamed intelligence and forensic group commanding officer was not the counsel who represented the two accused officers in the preliminary investigation in Malolos court.

De Lima also said in the letter that the justice department had neither been furnished a copy of the court order nor informed of the plan to file a motion to transfer Anotado and Osorio.

Burgos said the head of the AFP Human Rights Office, Col. Dominge Tobias, would meet with representatives of HRW on Friday.

Still hopeful

Palparan was last seen on Dec. 19 last year in Ewokdok Municipal

BAG OF BLESSINGS
Petroleum Group chairman George Ty (L, 3rd) turns over a bag of blessings to a beneficiary in Toledo City as part of the P15 million worth of food packages distributed to some 500 families in his city by the Metrobank Group. The donation of food packages consisting of rice, canned goods, milk, coffee, sugar, noodles, and a snack pack for children was also made in Metro Manila, Muntinlupa, Bulacan, Bacolod City, Santiago City, Isabela, Cauayan City, Isabela, Dagupan City, Iloilo City, Cebu City, Tacloban City, Butuan City, Surigao City, Iligan, Ozamiz City, Zamboanga City and Butuan City. The highlight of the company's celebration of the 2012 Chinese New Year, the project is in support of the National Household Targeting System of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. It aims to support the government's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. The distribution was graced by Toledo City Mayor Eutiquio Espinosa and Vice Mayor Aileen Zamora.

Cebu LP headed for a split for 2013 polls

CEBU CITY—The Liberal Party (LP) in Cebu appears to be heading for a split after former senator John Henry "Sonny" Osmeña announced plans of forming his own lineup for the 2013 local elections.

Osmeña told reporters on Tuesday that he would not support former Fiduciario Gerardo Ilido who was expected to be LP's gubernatorial candidate in Cebu.

He questioned Ilido's leadership as head of LP Cebu and described him as passive, timid and insensitive.

Osmeña said he would go around the province to look for an alternative to Ilido in the 2013 elections.

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Naia holds own survey of passengers

By Jerry E. Esplanada

INSTEAD of relying on survey results of foreign travel websites, like the Guide to Sleeping in Airports and Frommer's, the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) has been conducting its own in-house surveys of passengers using the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's (NAIA) four terminals.

This was disclosed by the managers of Naia Terminals 1 and 4 who both stressed the importance of conducting such surveys on the facilities' level of cleanliness, services, on-time departures, and ease of navigation, among others.

Dante Basanta, the manager of the decades-old Naia Terminal 1, said they were "actually doing a periodic survey on passengers' satisfaction."

While he did not provide details about the results of their own survey, Basanta noted that "there were also positive reactions" from travelers using the terminal.

World's worst

The Guide to Sleeping in Airports tagged Naia 1 as the "world's worst airport" in 2011, which had supposedly worsened from the latter-day website's assessment in 2010 that it was the fifth worst airport in the world and the worst in Asia.

Frommer's, the travel guide publisher, meanwhile has tagged Naia 1 as the second worst airport worldwide, just behind New York's John F. Kennedy Airport (frommers.com).

Rico Gonzales, the Terminal 1 head, said the MIAA in-house survey was "in fact being discussed by the group who worked on the IRD certification of the terminal."

IRD, short for International Organization for Standardization, is a network of the national standard bureaus of 163 countries worldwide. Its secretariat is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Two weeks ago, Basanta dismissed the issues raised on the Frommer's website as "old and rehashed."

New Naia 1

He said the terminal management had "already done several improvements in the past. But we will definitely see a new Naia Terminal 1 by the end of the year."

Frommer's had cited an agency France-Presse report saying the terminal "has been a frequent target of criticism with travelers and the business community complaining it is congested, run-down and filthy, with toilets that do not work."

The Department of Transportation and Communications has rolled out a program for the upgrade and structural rehabilitation of the terminal to the tune of P1.165 billion.

Basanta said the plan would cover "retrofitting works, aesthetic improvement and renovation of rapid exit taxiway."

MIAA general manager Jose Angel Honrado has said the retrofitting program would start with the pullout of the arrival lobby modules that leads to the departure level in order to create more space for passenger movement.

Honrado said there were also plans to move the banks and duty-free shops from the arrival lobby and renovate area to enlarge space for arriving passengers.

The MIAA has allocated P500 million for architectural, engineering and interior design and works to improve the terminal's internal facilities.

Also, P560 million has been set aside for retrofitting to improve the structural integrity of the terminal building and make it compliance with the National Structural Code of 2010.

To address runway congestion, P500 million will be used for the reconstruction of a rapid exit taxiway.

Another P60 million will be used for the complete rehabilitation of the terminal's 72 toilets.

Long-term plans

The long-term plan also provides for moving some of the international airline firms currently using Terminal 1 to the newer terminal 3, he said.

Terminal 1 was originally designed to accommodate 4.5 million passengers yearly, but now serves some 7.3 million passengers.

Flag-carrier Philippine Airlines is based at Terminal 2, while Cebu Pacific and Air Philippines flights emanate from Terminal 3.

Terminal 4, or the old Manila Domestic Airport, is the base of operations of smaller carriers Zest Air and Sea Air.

During an earlier interview, Honrado appealed to Terminal 1 critics to stop calling it the worst airport in the world.

"Telling about the supposedly worst airport in the world, they say some people voted. But who voted? And how many voted? What's their methodology?" he said.

He said the MIAA "has been rehabilitating the airport since last year."

He said that "even before the alleged survey results came out, we were already rehabilitating the facility."

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INQUIRER
OPINION

100 too many

EDITORIAL

THAT THE prosecutors in Chief Justice Renato Corona's impeachment trial intend to call some 100 witnesses to testify is not funny, and as though to prove it, no one's laughing. Or maybe there are a number out there showing teeth, but in a grimace, or a snarl, or even a sneer. Do the prosecutors sincerely think that the public is prepared to dally with this issue till kingdom come? If they do, then they fail to read the prevailing mood.

And the mood is that the prosecutors should wrap up their case, particularly Article 2, as swiftly as they can, refine their strategy, and marshal their enormous skills in the face of the defense's clever performance. Certainly they can't afford another surprise like that sprung on Tuesday by their own supposed key witness on the matter of the special price given to the Corona spouses for the 303-square meter penthouse condominium at the posh The Bellagio, which surprise unfortunately served, from the legal perspective, to defuse the "P20-million discount" bomb.

There is a major enemy, and the prosecutors' substitution of the 100 witnesses list comes across as an act of folly. Their public opinion is crucial in an impeachment trial is acknowledged by the contending camps; flagging public attention as a result of the sheer ludicrousness of listening to a long procession of witnesses testify (often in fits and starts, courtesy of the credibility-compromised Imelda Cassus' persistent breaking of the letter of the law) is therefore not to be wished.

To be sure, one could say that the prosecution has been driven to extreme measures. Its spokesperson, Marilara Ilagan, Ifunsora Quimbo, suggested as much last week when he said that the idea was to inundate the senator-judges with such testimonial and documentary evidence as to ensure Corona's conviction of betrayal of public trust, violation of the Constitution and guilt and corruption. The point being, he indicated, that the lengthy list would not have been drawn up and submitted to the impeachment court had not the defense been "so technical in its objections" to the prosecutors's evidence.

But the prosecution's frustrations (and the defense's skillful maneuvers) aside, in less than two weeks the impeachment trial has succeeded in presenting to the public a picture of a Chief Justice who has been less than forthright in accomplishing his statements of assets, liabilities and net worth, as shown by the omission of certain properties and the undervaluation of others in the documents, and ethically lacking in receiving a not inconsiderable discount in at least one property purchase. Is that par for the course (as suggested by parties who insist that only those who have been truly honest in their SALN declarations may cast the first stone)? We think not, because the position Corona holds is so lofty in sacrosanct, as to demand the most stringent behavior. We, imagine the *primus inter pares* of the judiciary as Corona once described himself (in the process boldly challenging Malacañang to look up the meaning of the phrase in case it did not know), behaving like some shady government functionary in committing sins of omission in the accomplishment of the required documents.

Does the public actually need the testimony of representatives of Megaworld Corp., Ayala Land Inc., Community Innovations Inc., Burgundy Realty Corp., Joha Bay Management Corp., Housing Land Use Regulatory Board, Filinvest Alabang Inc., Philippine National Bank, Land Bank of the Philippines, and the majority of the others named in the prosecution's 100-witness list? Is the prosecution still required to go through the paces of presenting them and being blocked at every turn by a defense panel that continues to behave as though the matter is at bar were a criminal case?

The answer should be clear by now: Only if the public still has to be convinced that the Chief Justice's moral fitness to remain in his post is questionable at best. And that whether the senator-judges vote to acquit or convict him, Corona has become damaged goods.

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The outsider

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

THE PRICE you pay for being in the public eye, I remember telling my old friend Ronald Llamas after he took the high-profile job of Presidential adviser on political affairs, is that you must avoid doing what every other person takes for granted on most days: take boring pictures of DVDs, or rummaging through fake-branded goods and donated second-hand clothes in garages and alley alleys. Don't smoke in public places, I told him. Observe speed limits. Never break traffic rules; they're protected by cops-on-the-beat. Don't dine on your cases. Declare your assets faithfully, no matter how meager! Pick one. Be careful about your personal life. You're no longer an ordinary mortal: you're now a government official.

But the news must really be slow these days despite the ongoing impeachment trial at the Senate. For almost a week now, the media have found Llamas' use of buying pirated DVDs at a neighborhood mall previous enough to place it among their top stories. Then project ed, it is made to share the same gravity as the offenses for which Chief Justice Renato Corona is being tried, or the kidnapping charges that former National Bureau of Investigation Director Magtanggol Gatdula faces. Opposition politicians and anachronistic columnists have called for his resignation.

The irony is that, while selling pirated DVDs is illegal, buying them for personal enjoyment is not. The Optical Media Board, a small agency of government, confines highly publicized raids on the DVD malls that sell these products, but not often enough to deter them from re-opening. Unlike the campaign against illegal drugs, the entire operation against pirated and fake and smuggled goods is a fragmented one. It is not, as far as I know, an integral feature of the police or even of local governments. That is why pirated DVDs continue to be sold and bought openly and endlessly.

Since, in any way, Ronald Llamas has become hero: to a public official, he is expected to support the government's fight against all forms of illicit activity, including the goods undersized campaign against copyright infringement. He has rightly apologized for this lapse, even if, deep in his heart, he may not be inclined to defend the interests of the big multinational corporations that assert their intellectual property rights over the copied material. Knowing him well, I am sure that the DVDs he bought did not include a single film open to classification by local producers.

One issue to observe now is how the experts rate that pornographic movie could have been among Ronald's quasi first loss. This line of thought is consistent with the seeming need to infer his moral center from the latest incident. Has surprisingly the master of the high-powered rifle butted in his private vehicle last year to being revisited. Never mind that the gun turned out to be licensed, and that he was attending a conference abroad when the gun was found in his car. Still, the media were alert him as the owner of the gun. The image that is projected by all this incidents publicly is that of a master man: lucky enough to land a senior job in government because he happens to share with the President a penchant for guns.

Ronald and I have worked for many years in various political movements, including Bayan, the nationalist group founded by former UP President Francisco Nemenzo. We have marched together in countless rallies. One of those took place on Feb. 24, 2006, the 20th anniversary of the Edsa 1 uprising. It was the day Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a state of national emergency. I was arrested on Edsa while riding in the police wagon that was to take me to the hanging strike. For trying to rescue me from the plainclothes men who had led me away, Ronald was also arrested and charged with sedition. In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court later declared our arrest illegal.

This I can say about Ronald Llamas, and I don't mind asserting as if I am giving a character testimony: There are very few like him, who are unconcerned by political power or dazzled by its perks. Llamas clearly has the ear and confidence of the nation's highest official. This role is as difficult as one can imagine it—a double-dealer, a "back-channel" work er, an emissary in sensitive matters, a messenger, an ideologue, a problem-solver—rolled into one.

One national record abundantly shows what reticence in this position can do in maximize the influence that comes with it. He can quietly push for the appointment of people to essential posts in government, and remove a repeller out from their sockets. He can lobby for corporations awaiting approval of a government contract or franchise, and change a few. Ronald has engaged in none of these. He could easily have asked dealers of pirated goods to send him a share of their newly seized DVDs. But no, he chose to go to the mall himself, accompanied by his two daughters, and pay for his purchases—like everyone else.

Ronald is poor—which is why he buys those sweaters earlier than from Amanpulo. Just his name is enough to tell you that. He has written books on philosophy and from history to literature. He library consists of books he patiently dug up from the dusty piles of bargain bookstores. His idea of a good time consists of spending hours searching for old jazz and blues records either at flea markets. He has never socially oblivious of the time and has surrounded himself with people who share this trait.

What then is exactly how the naval photograph taken of him at the mall in Quezon City captured him. This outsider to an entrenched culture of connected criminality and political ability was once large by the state, but he will always remain instinctively a rebel.

public.livedigest.com

Important

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

DEL FRANCO, I couldn't understand why no one asked if only because Corona's suit in Bellagio was damaged by the typhoon. Is no one to be asked about the severity of the damage, dagger Estrada asked about the severity of the typhoon. And the prosecutors until now refuse to judges asked if it was normal for Mega world to sell damaged units.

Doubtless these were relevant questions. Estrada had a point. If Megaworld sustained considerable damage to its property, why didn't it appeal to the insurance companies? Or did it? In which case the documents and photographs should reveal the truth. Estrada had another as well. What was the typhoon that caused so huge a damage to one of its standard units it was forced to climb P3 million from 671 square of "Bellagio" and "views of the Valley" but neither one took place in 2008. And the prosecutors had a point. Was Megaworld willing to risk its reputation as a seller of classy residences selling a prime unit (a penthouse) in one of its showcase projects (Bellagio) that wouldn't top its list to the highest judicial authority of the land?

But my own fervent imagination went in the direction of whether only Corona's choice unit bore the entire brunt of the typhoon's fury. I'm trying to visualize it. For Megaworld, which did not get property for having a load, cut off P3 million from its price but a penthouse, the disaster must have been dire. For that to have happened, the typhoon must have been correspondingly dire. Now, if the typhoon was so, how come only Corona's unit bears the entire building bore any serious damage? Not if mighty fool had it in for him and sent a concentrated blast of wind and rain, in lieu of a thunderbolt, in his contemplated resting place.

All of which made me wonder why no one asked this, were the other units damaged as well, albeit to varying degrees? Then, did Megaworld offer to slash the prices to other buyers commensurate to the extent of damage? There, since both Giovanni Ng and Bob Hermosilla mentioned the global recession as one of the reasons for slashing the price of Corona's penthouse, did it do the same for the other buyers on the same ground?

But I digress. Until all that, prosecution's lack of probing Megaworld representatives in better to ease of emotional conduct against Corona was quickly exonerated. At the very least, what made it so was that it gave them all sorts of procedural problems, as Juan Ponce Enrile and Senator Joker Arroyo kept pointing out. If prosecution had wanted to badger its witnesses to make them yield the truth against their will, then it should have subpoenaed them as hostile witnesses. It did not. Which put it in the ridiculous position, at least legal-wise, of doubting the testimony of its own witnesses. Estrada raised that point as several journalists in Joseph Joseme Perez's questioning and during his on direct. Was he even examining his own witness?

At the very most, the prosecutors were laying the basis for the defense to say in its rebuttal: Your honors, don't mind us. We're only showing what a complete mess we're in. Others by bribing a government official. Some of all a chief justice? Naturally Megaworld will justify in every possible way its selling of a penthouse to Corona at the bargain basement price it did. Who's to say that the cost of repairing the unit wouldn't come up to P3 million? The most that could happen is that Megaworld may be accused of being stupid, not with being devious. And what's to say that a chief justice will not settle for a penthouse that has been much depreciated by a storm, which will require time and money to make it reasonably habitable? The most that can happen is that he may be accused of being cheap, not with being a criminal.

If prosecutors want to continue trying to prove that Megaworld undertook a veiled bribe, they will need witnesses other than officials from Megaworld, hostile or friendly, to do it. The innocent companies might have something to say about it. The various agencies dealing with disaster assessments might have something to say about it. The other Bellagio tenants who did not get price reductions might have something to say about it. But not the official of Megaworld.

Otherwise, prosecution's best bet remains the disarmingly honest Corona's Spanish-trained income and his ability to afford homestyle habitats. And, well, his stipulation that the value of his Bellagio unit is less than P3 million. I'm tempted to borrow from a bank to buy it from him, but he can always say the thing has been on sale and has encountered value. Corona's the name, palusot's the game.

True, Asker Arroyo is alarmed that prosecution might be contemplating impending another justice, thereby sending the Senate's time. What if prosecution has denied this every if so, what if it? What if the Senate got to do that's so important? Well, of course the senators could be discussing the US proposal to field more troops here, which would be idiotic for us to agree to, but I don't see them showing any signs of being headed in that direction.

What's more, I don't see prosecutors getting anything if Iwas don't get followed anyway? Where's the sense of having laws if we get no justice anyway? Which has always been our basis. We have a Congress that keeps producing laws that no one particularly minds, which makes Congress to keep proposing more laws the Charter since it apparently doesn't work. There is nothing wrong with the Charter, there is everything wrong with us. First let's obey laws, then let's change them if following them doesn't work. That's what the impeachment does: It compels us to obey laws. That's what the impeachment does, it compels us to seek justice. That's what the impeachment does: It compels us to respect reason and rule.

What to God's name could be more important?

Prosecutors linked to Hacienda's law firms

OUTLOOK

Rigoberto Tiglao

BOY WILL Espina, lead prosecutor in Chief Justice Renato Corona's impeachment trial, and his wife Rosario Arigedi, as well as three private prosecutors, have been very closely linked with the law firms representing the Cojuangcos in their Supreme Court cases.

Their association with these law firms bolsters the accusation that President Aquino wants Corona out as Supreme Court chief justice so the numerous fiery dog-for-his-master's-strategy to reverse the Philippine Overseas Construction Board case, which if implemented would mean the Cojuangcos' bankruptcy. The case wants the Court to rule that it should be paid P3.9 billion as compensation for the funds to be raised over to farmers, and not just P1.96 million which the tribunal directed it to, by Dec. 22, 2011 resolution.

Hacienda Luisita Inc.'s law firm has been the home to Jesus Elias Pond Asuncion & Lim (JEPAL) Offices. Ibid and his wife joined the firm straight from law school in 1990, the year Corazon Juanico Cojuangco was elected President. "Volunteers, Ibid and his wife are on-campus of their firm," a law school classmate of his said.

While Tupas officially left the firm when he was elected congressman in 2007, it is widely believed that he continued to work for the firm, "and whose staff he has continued to rely for his legal research and advice.

His wife, on the other hand, is prominently listed as a junior partner in the JEPAL website, although Ibid's law classmate says there is no one that she and another junior partner are "on leave." Sources however claimed that Miss Tupas—after the congressman's third of well—thereby because her Congress workplace and the firm's headquarters at Ongpin-Binondo Building in Makati, where she has maintained her office since 1999.

Tupas' law firm has been for decades the Cojuangcos' main counsel. One of the firm's partners was Corazon's sister Josefina, and Ibid's brother Jaime Juanico is court front-man, as well as to de facto spokesman, interviewed often in GMA7 Network, whose chairman Felipe L. Gozon is also a senior partner. A junior partner, Regina A. Morales, studied—or perhaps lamp-studied—Ibid's course at legal school at the Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board from 1988-1989, when it approved the Hacienda's sham land reform through stock distribution. (The agrarian reform secretary then was Philip Juico, whose wife Margie Juico is Tupas's Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office—Ibid's boss.)

Three private prosecutors are with the Poblete Bautista and Reyes firm, known for the Cojuangco-affiliated Luisita Industrial Park Inc., which sold supply over in the wake of the tribunal's ruling. Marlo Bautista is the firm's managing partner, whose Gen. Franklin Drilon had to recuse from his supreme in the trial's ban. Drilon's Bautista developing wage flight after his humiliation. Bautista has since ordered to the trial one of his associate partner Jose Bernardo and senior associate Joseph Antonio Ibarra, who had his day of glory when he was the war-gam chronically but unwittingly helped the debtor in his handling of the Hyperion receivership.

Tupas is not only closely linked to Hacienda Luisita, but to the President himself, who has described his family with his in-laws. (As father Jaime Juanico revealed in May 2011, was appointed to the lucrative post of director of PNOC Exploration Co. last Nov. 24, on the eve of Aquino's bid to impeach Corona. That was despite the fact that the Supreme Court has not yet ruled on whether the graft case against him should be pursued. The only name, also had unanimous Hadlee Tupas-Bellena, was given a special post as "national coordinator" of PNOC.

I wrote here last Jan. 19 that Mr. Aquino could quickly refute allegations on his motive for taking Corona out on legal justice simply by declaring that his Cojuangco class, whatever the outcome of the trial, would strictly abide by the Court's decision, after it would unfailingly be petitioned asking the Court for an astronomical compensation for its lands. Neither Aquino nor any of his spokespersons has bothered to respond.

Tupas' last line (Ibid on Dec. 16, 2011, at the Court's "Motion to Lift Stay and Reconsider Resolution of Nov. 22, 2011 [on Hacienda Luisita]," as it grants the appeal when on Dec. 12, the impeachment complaint was tainted through Congress.

Ibid's duo "Motion," do some arithmetic, and you will have the reason why the Cojuangcos want to be paid for Hacienda Luisita. If the Court bolsters under their demand, it would result in the biggest payment to a private entity by government in our history, the largest corporate ever of any Philippine law firm, more than any of the billions that the national with Hacienda Luisita, and immense wealth for the Tupas, if they—and most probably they have—still have jointly sharing rights in Hacienda Luisita.

I had been shocked over Tupas and his colleagues' extremely unprincipled behavior, the failure which I had seen only in the eyes of communist-front heads or of people sent to revenge their murdered kin, for now I understand why they have thrown all scruples out the window, sacrificed even wanted to deny the truth, to be able to continue to live in a modern version of a medieval manor, filmy billions of treasure, in reverse.

My earlier report that the Cojuangcos are asking the Court P3 billion—which the class has not refuted, is wrong.

Rather, based on their Dec. 16 petition, they would be getting, if the Court buckles under...Inc. Inc it or not—a staggering P44 billion), and that will make Corona's impeachment [which was that Ibid's] worth it. As Aquino's true believers are fond of saying: The truth will out you live.

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Cancer and medical tourism

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Cerez P. Duyo

WORLD HEALTH and tourism officials as well as health institutions are doing their best to promote medical tourism in the Philippines by way of drawing foreign patients to most of Filipino medical expertise. Chinese hospitals are beating them through aggressive advertising right in our countries in general. This is especially so in the cancer department. But this is getting ahead of the story.

The third week of January being national Cancer Consciousness Week and, with A being World Cancer Day, the Philippine Society of Medical Oncology (PSMO) recently held a press conference to highlight the dangers of cancer, its prevention, and other related issues. PSMO's campaign theme is "Fighting Cancer: Education, Prevention, Treatment."

Founded in 1969, PSMO is a scientific, professional organization of medical oncologists (cancer manifesting 1,465 members) who are dedicated to the sciences and the ethical and holistic practice of medical oncology. This means active participation in national programs and campaigns to promote cancer awareness and safe practices in the field of medical oncology for optimal patient results.

The national picture is not pretty. Statistics from 2008 to 2010 have shown a steady increase in cancer incidence. PSMO and Globocan research estimates that in 2012, new cancer cases (in men and women) will be roughly 82,400. The top cancers seen in women include breast, cervix, uterus and lungs, while in men they are lungs, liver, colon-rectum and prostate.

The good news is that non-advocacy groups are spreading cancer awareness. Said PSMO president Dr. Jolyanne Gay Lapus, "Every day is cancer consciousness day for us. We work to raise the public with an interest in cancer so that cancer deaths in the ultimate goal, but if that can't be achieved, it is important to get proper and safe treatment as early as possible."

PSMO vice president Dr. Ellie May Villegas and their earlier detection and better outcomes have resulted in decreased cancer deaths (119 persons) in the United States since the 1990s, reversing decades of increases. "Hopefully, the Philippines will follow suit," she added.

Dr. Dennis Salvaa shared the latest research findings in cancer treatment-related issues. Unknown to many, there are carcinogenic chemicals in the work place that increase the risk of cancer.

An issue that came up in the press conference was the aggressive advertising of Chinese hospitals to entice Filipinos to be "medical tourists" in China. In the past month, major dailies carried ads that boasted of new technologies and innovative treatment procedures for cancer patients in China. These ads even carried stories of individual patients (non-Filipinos) who purportedly benefited from the treatments.

Representatives of a Chinese hospital were up to schools with Chinese-Filipino populations to do their promotion. Their target audiences are not the students but the Chinese-Filipino parents. This is according to a doctor (with Chinese ancestry) from a well-known Metro Manila hospital. Her daughter is scheduled to study in one of these Chinese hospitals.

This doctor happens to have experienced first-hand what going in one of these China hospitals was like. Her own brother who had lung cancer died within seven months despite assurances from the Chinese doctors that he was "95 percent cured."

This doctor's brother had undergone procedures here and in Singapore. chemotherapy among them, but these were not completed because, before the latter's, her brother and his family had decided that he should go to China for treatment. Despite doubts, the doctor did not get in the way of her brother's decision. She had no clear idea what he was going through. All she was told was that her brother was getting better.

On the patient's last trip to China things were very "I got a call. I spoke to a doctor who spoke broken English but we could hardly understand each other. I decided that, got a visa and flew to China. That was the last I saw of my brother."

"People at the airport were not familiar with the hospital even though its name rang a bell in the Philippines. Well, it was a building on what looked like Ayala's Ayala, right close to the street. You should be able to imagine that. My brother was on the seventh floor where the rooms for foreigners are located to be. While he was dying there was nothing to indicate to him, not even oxygen. He died 15 minutes after I arrived. The hospital had no morgue. He had to be brought to some place."

And then there's the issue of so-called enhancement implements. Oncologists shared horror stories about patients coming home from China with the still radioactive seeds inside them. "Pity the airplane passenger sitting beside a radioactive patient," said an oncologist who knew of such cases.

In talks across the Filipino oncologists, among the best in the world, said the state of the art procedures in our five-star hospitals, and being aggressively promoted? They are medical tourists's best kept secret. "We don't have the funds," Lapus lamented.

Book launch: On Feb. 4, "running priest" Fr. Robert Reyes will launch his book, "Refuse To Struggles in Morality, Glimpses of Sacrality" that documents Hong Kong's overseas Filipino workers' (OFWs) battle against cancer. The venue is the St. Dominic Medical Center in Bacoor, Cavite where visiting Canadian doctors will present a new procedure for cervical cancer. Proceeds for cancer charities from book will be available at Popular Bookstore on E. Morato, Quezon City.

Reyes had accompanied many women (OFWs) on their journey towards healing and to the threshold of eternity.

Send feedback to: straplight@mail.com or www.cerezduyo.com

Answering Iran

WORLD VIEW

Richard N. Haass

NOT YURR—We know quite a bit about Iran's nuclear program, and what we know is not encouraging. Iran is reported to be enriching uranium at two sites—some of it to levels of 20 percent. Far beyond what is required for civilian purposes. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports that Iran is carrying out activities to develop designs for nuclear warheads. In short, Iranian officials' claims that their nuclear program is aimed solely at power generation or medical research has all plausibility.

Yet there is much that the world does not know. For example, we do not know whether Iran is conducting secret activities at undisclosed sites, or when it could develop a crude nuclear weapon. We also do not know whether Iran's divided leadership has decided to build a nuclear weapon. Or to stop just short, calculating that the country would derive many of the benefits of possessing nuclear weapons without running the risks or incurring the costs of actually doing so.

The United States is also confronted the world with difficult choices. None is costless or risk-free. Moreover, neither the costs nor the risks are particularly calculable with precision.

One option would be to accept and live with a nuclear-armed Iran. This assumes that Iran could be deterred from using its weapons, much as the Soviet Union was during the Cold War. Missile defenses could be expanded; the United States could announce security guarantees so that Iran would not respond to the use of its nuclear weapons would be met with a decisive American response.

But there are significant drawbacks to acquiescing to a nuclear-armed Iran. Given its use of subterfuge and terrorism against its adversaries, a nuclear-armed Iran might be even more assertive. It might transfer nuclear-related material, technology or weapons to other Hezbollah's Venezuela, for example, or to terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas that neither share personal enmity and stability in the region, Iran or Israel could be tempted to strike first in a crisis.

Nor can it be assumed that Iran's divided and radical leadership would always act rationally, or that proliferation would stop with the Islamic Republic. If Iran develops its nuclear weapons, countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt would be tempted to purchase or develop their own weapons of their own. A Middle East with multiple Iranian-style nuclear weapons would be a far more dangerous place.

At the opposite end of the spectrum of policy choices is a preventive attack—a military strike most likely by Israel, or by the United States, or by both against sites in Iran associated with its nuclear program. The core objective would be to stop or at least delay the emergence of a threat that is still perhaps far.

Here, again, there are considerable drawbacks. Even a successful preventive attack would at most set back Iran's nuclear program a few years. It would almost certainly be virtually, presumably in underground, fortified sites that would make future attacks far more difficult (or impossible).

Moreover, Iran could well retaliate immediately against targets that could include Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Afghanistan and other US interests worldwide—as well as sites on American territory. Hezbollah could be activated, as could the Iranian government's own operatives around the globe. In general, the price of all would skyrocket owing to shortages and fear, possibly driving much of the world economy already in a precarious position, into recession. An armed attack could also cause the Iranian people to rally around their government, reducing the chances that citizens responsible for undermining the regime.

If this essay is little surprise that the United States and much of the world have explored other options, including regime change in Iran. But however desirable that might be, no policy is worthwhile if it is being chosen. As a result, the principal policy issued Iran centers on the imposition of increasingly painful economic sanctions. The rationale underlying that policy is that Iran's leaders, fearful of losing political control, will decide that the economic costs are the sanctions' effects, will recalculate the costs and benefits of their nuclear activities and become receptive to negotiated settlements.

That could happen. International support for sanctions is considerable and growing. It is becoming more difficult for Iran (whose economy depends to a large extent on oil exports of more than two million barrels a day) to find customers—and especially customers willing to pay full price. Meanwhile, Iran's ability to import sensitive technology, including imported goods out of many financial worlds.

Additional elements of current policy that seems to be having an effect are clandestine efforts aimed at impeding Iran's ability to import sensitive technologies. Viruses have infiltrated computers in Iran, reducing the efficiency of the centrifuges central to enriching uranium. It is also possible that the assassination of selected individuals has slowed the progress of the nuclear efforts.

But slowing Iran's efforts is not the same as stopping them. So one question is whether current sanctions can be extended and tightened. Iran, China and Russia must determine their priorities. Iranian's priorities is whether they are willing to pay the price to maintain good relations with Iran enough to persuade Iran's leaders to accept verifiable limits on their nuclear program. And a third unsettled issue is how long Israel or the United States will tolerate Iranian efforts before striking militarily.

Indeed, the only certainty may be that Iran's nuclear program will be a major international issue in 2013—quite possibly the most important one.

Project Syndicate

Richard N. Haass, formerly director of policy planning in the US State Department, is president of The Council on Foreign Relations.

We the restless

MY SISTER took up housemistry at a local university and in the next 20 years that followed, she worked in various mental banks, steadily climbing the corporate ladder and reaping the rewards that loyalty and competency bring. At one point, she was appointed assistant governor of our country's central bank, where she spent almost a decade until she retired last year. Forty years, three jobs.

I am 25 years old and currently on my third job already. I first worked as staff member of a newspaper, then as manager of an art gallery. I made overseas to pursue graduate studies and now hold a finance and operations executive role at a telecommunications company here in the United Kingdom. Not exciting, it is the term given to describe this behavior of shifting jobs in a short span of time. You will be forgiven to ask, 'was I ever fired?' Yes. Was I ever unhappy? No. In fact, I loved the art gallery job so much that I could have stayed forever, really. But unlike my father, I am not content with being employed by the exact expression of my mother—loyalty bizarrely, relativity—I belong to a generation easily enticed by the hallcalled "new opportunity." The "Millennials," as we are called, employ a restless mindset: we want to travel, we want to earn big money, we want to experience this and that before settling down. We want it all and we want it all now. Instant gratification is what we expect and what we think we are entitled to.

At the onset of the global recession, the Wall Street Journal wrote about our sense of entitlement: "They want to be CEOs tomorrow...yet expect more vacation...they demand less much we earn...and would sweep a job anywhere commitment it's a horror offer came along. "Was the generation bandit? Probably. Was it true? Absolutely. What spurred this kind of mindset and behavior—the change how the world operates or did the world change how we do? I argue the latter.

In my mother's time, a degree from a local university guaranteed you a career. Now, a master's degree even from the best institutions of the world is only bolstered by job adverts as "desirable" or "an advantage." In the UK as in elsewhere, one would have to meet both the "essential" and "desirable" person specifications to have a fighting chance of getting invited for interview. While "hobbies" and "interests" can get you a meager rule in CVs in the past, now they can be the deciding factor to determine if one will die in the company culture. Whilst staying 18 years in a job was beyond approach before, a number of employers now question why you did not expand your horizons and grow. Whilst a particular specialization is still important, what matters increasingly now is a person's flexibility and transferable skills.

The youth of today knows the world's current expectations and we find ourselves pacifying in more and more scenarios into our profile. We do studying, part-time jobs, voluntary roles, sports, society membership and travel to enhance ourselves. It is exhausting, but we know it is what and we give our best to comply. And sometimes, even if you fulfill all that, you still might not get the job if you do not have the right passport. This happened to me. I was so close to landing my dream job and I lost it on a technicality technicality.

I was interviewed by the experience and fled to Madrid for a time-out. It was good but being immersed in Spanish culture and establishing new friendships and I came back to the UK rejuvenated. Flying to another country for a week because a job interview excited hardly is not something that lucky listeners would have done. But the advent of budget airlines and the ease of connections and communications changed the very landscape of trade. As geographies have ceased to be boundaries for both business and leisure, this enabled our restlessness. When my mother was still working, our carreers trip per year was planned as a luxury. On the other hand, I have been to several countries in a year, and I have not even started my mother leveraged at this. Yes, perhaps it was a real list too would not how could I not go when there is so much to see in Europe, and this is made within reach by Ryanair's cheap flights?

The Internet also acts as a big enabler to our restless behavior. Because we willingly share our lives on the Web via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn/her, and can upload our CVs to various recruitment websites, headhunters are able to conduct their searches not only locally or regionally but globally for investors, a lady speaking with an unmistakable Singaporean accent called me a few days ago from the London office of a recruitment agency that specializes in matching recent Asian graduates of top US universities to employers who want them back in our home region. A few months ago, a friend posted on facebook pictures of an exhibition in London showcasing some Filipino painters Danes. Hooked up the gallery director on LinkedIn, after a friendly message saying I think it's super cool that there exhibition in London and half asked if I was free, he replied inviting me to drop by the gallery for a chat. Not something his mind knew that convenient although there are no loans how to convert cash connections into concrete outcomes, later on.

Indeed the world has changed a lot from what it was during the time of our parents. The affordability of international leisure, easiness of travel and advances in technology are some factors that influence how we think and how we live. Will these normal ways we demand can much we earn and I reckon this is because we have done too much too early in fulfilling what we supposed of us and what we expect of ourselves, we build up on what we think we are entitled to. So our career plans, we were supposed to be validated by the messages we "find ourselves." I get out of my comfort zone in Manila and came to Europe with the hope of "finding myself," but as I realized how much bigger the world is and with more possibilities at hand, things got a bit messier. Although I am enjoying the freedom I do not like it when someone around going home and when a friend has a good opportunity that will enable me to. Hopefully sooner rather than later!

Fatima Ayala, 25, graduated from Ateneo de Manila University in 2008, worked for two years and then moved to the United Kingdom to pursue her master's degree in Business Administration at the University of Edinburgh. She currently works in InCommon Ltd. which is a telecommunications company in the United Kingdom.

YOUNG BLOOD

Fatima Ayala

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below.—Ed.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contribution by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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Suggestions to speed up Corona's impeachment trial

LETTERS

IN SELECTION to the various committees functioning thus the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona is moving compellingly slow, the blame cannot be entirely laid on the shoulder of the prosecution panel. Technical requirements of due process matters (subpoena, projection, which delays the wheels of justice grind slow.

To expedite the proceedings, may I suggest to the prosecution (but to be mindful and direct to the point, instead of asking questions that suggest to lack of knowledge of the nature of the documents brought by subpoenaed witnesses. As these documents are pre-marked and both defense and prosecution already know which the relevant are available, the prosecution, right after the witness is qualified, can immediately request the subpoenaed documents to be introduced to it.

Instead of asking "Did you bring with you this and that document?" which is repeated in so many instances as does any discussion, the witness may be asked outright in the following manner: "Among the documents you brought to court which you just handed to the Lo Deed of Sale, already presented as Exhibit "___", can you state who are the parties to this contract, etc?"

I also suggest that the prosecution look at "Goldstein's Trial Technique," Volume 3, 3rd Edition, by Fred Lane, J.D., for further reference. After all, the senate's for a trial and parties need not be painstakingly slow.

—ERNESTON ARPILLA JR.
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Pestaño 'revelation' not really strange

THE EDITOR: re Gwen Boyd's Jan. 14 column titled "Heralds appeared to herding priest." Discussion, 1/19/12) Truly [illegible] must be average in this cynical world. But I affirm her account, which many may see as weird.

From the Scriptures, we read the writings of Pascin der Corinthians. The Holy Spirit dispenses various spiritual manifestations/ gifts such as discernment, faith, miracles and the like gave us.

What the minister of God had regarding the "dream" or "vision" about the death of Philip Rosales is the gift of the Word of knowledge—the supernatural means of having information coming from the Holy One. Angels of God can manifest in the form of departed persons to convey messages.

In like manner, the adversary—the devil—can demonstrate similar powers. But such powers are counterfeit power. The devil can likewise manifest in the form of the persons appearing to be serving over the teenager. And there is "familiar spirits," spirit from demons/ spirits is familiar with the individual they impersonate. The "mal-spirit's" purpose or action is not to speak for truth, but to deceive.

The Scripture does give us warnings about counterfeits. Discernment is needed to determine whether the appearance comes from the Holy One or from the adversary—the counterfeit.

The Christian account of how Satan fooled the magicians of the Pharaoh is the classic story of the clashes between the spirit of truth and light and the forces of darkness.

—BOB CARINA,
bapbus@hotmail.com

EVELYN PESTAÑO, mother of Philippine Navy Ensign Philip Pestaño, showing her dead son's picture during a press conference at the Bantayan, Quezon City

News report on Fuentebella family 'replete with falsehoods'

WE PROTEST in behalf of our client Rep. Arnulfo P. Fuentebella, regarding the article titled "Filing materials for re-count stalks tension up in Cardiet village," which was written by Ann Rosander in Inquirer, 1/14/12.

The reader's article is replete with falsehoods and is clearly intended to malign the Fuentebella family. If Fuentebella had even bothered to check the publicly-known reporting the incident, he would have known that the all truck was not loaded with filling materials coming from Barangay Pasong Putik. The filing materials referred to in Fuentebella's article were actually destined to Evia Subdivision brought about by construction materials. Coincidentally, Evia Subdivision failed to take into account the fact that appropriate charges have been instituted against members of the SKFP because of the event. Furthermore, contrary to Inquirer's news report, the all truck was a property of Pascin Construction, a company which is owned by Atty. Ernesto Pefiel.

It was highly irresponsible for Inquirer to endanger the reputation of the Fuentebella family without even attempting to verify the circumstances surrounding the incident.

—JOSE MANUEL C. PALAROA, counsel for Rep. Arnulfo P. Fuentebella

Corona being tried as SC member, not CJ

CHIEF JUSTICE asked attention recidence of Chief Justice Renato Coronas wrongdoing when he was just an associate justice should be addressed against him, considering that he is being impeached as chief justice, thus suggesting that the impeachment can be limited only to his acts as a chief justice.

But the Constitution does not provide for impeachment as a mode of removing a chief justice from his post; it provides for impeachment as a mode of removing members of the Supreme Court from office. This means that the rank of a member of the Supreme Court is irrelevant and immaterial as far as impeachment is concerned. It is merely technical. The impeachment court is not the rank, but the membership in the high court.

Thus, the Chief Justice is not being censured as chief justice. He is being censured as member of the Supreme Court. If evidence of wrongdoing from the time he became a member of the Supreme Court and during his entire membership in this tribunal could therefore be considered and admitted. Therefore, any evidence of wrongdoing while he was an associate justice cannot be barred and excluded just because he is now being removed from the highest of chief justice, precisely because that is the very purpose of evidence that be it liable to be a member of the Supreme Court, be it as an associate justice or as a chief justice, or as an associate justice who became a chief justice.

As above, his title as associate justice did not cease to be title when he became chief justice.

—ELBERT MIRING GALVEZ,
gravitasmoves@gmail.com

Problem and purpose of PH education

THE PROBLEM in Philippine education is not the number of years children go to school. The problem is how to keep children in school. Millions of pupils who enter Grade 1 do not finish high school. K + 12 suggests time is well spent only those who will finish high school with the basic skills and values needed for productive citizenship. But it does not take into account the additional two years of agony that the children must go through to graduate and school buildings.

Without books, you get nowhere in life. If indeed adding two more years will improve the state of Philippine education as it attempts to benchmark the rest of the first World, why don't education officials look into the impact that six years of elementary education and four years of high school study in hundreds of thousands of children who go to school hungry.

The necessary is just to the number of subjects or available textbooks, or the number of hours spent on their reading. The problem is the unimportance of those awaiting the subjects, and the lack of books or classrooms or science laboratories in many poor municipalities because we prioritize the investing of foreign debt over the interest of our children.

We can add to that the lack of importance and incentives for our underpaid teachers, the corruption in the Department of Education and in the hiring of students, and the kind of environment children grow into. You actually have a recipe for people who will be able to survive on a daily basis, but you are not creating an individual who believes in himself, in his capabilities, who what it has to discover the kind of life he wants. You discover a child to become a person, not to become a nurse or an engineer. We send a child to school because of his inherent value of the person, not because he will be useful to someday.

—RUDY NEBRIJA,
rnnebrija@yahoo.com

Erratum

In "Edit (no. 3) column of Ramon J. Farolan ["Barangay lands have it, AFP chiefs of staff don't"), the military name of Fidel Ramos and Rodolfo Canoy were misstated. The reference to them should have read "... President [National Security Adviser] and Gen. Fidel Ramos [Philippine Army chief of staff] and Gen. Rodolfo Canoy [Philippine National Police chief]." In the following paragraph, the last sentence should have read, "My classmate Gen. Rodolfo Canoy took command of the Army..." not to Gen. Rodolfo Canoy.

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March 6, 2012		Php 3,000	150
		Php 100,000	5
March 20, 2012		Php 3,000	150
		Php 150,000	5

Erap to defense, prosecutors: Finish the trial for closure

By Cathy C. Yamsuan

FORMER President Joseph "Erap" Estrada wants the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona to end with a decision "based on strong evidence" to provide a closure that eluded his own trial 11 years ago.

"I want this trial to finish if only to correct the mistakes during my trial which was aborted. We need to have this closure because ... any issue remained unsettled will be subject to debate. Instead of [being] vindicated, [Corona] will remain under the cloud of controversy," Estrada said in an unfrank interview at the Senate yesterday.

"I would have been acquitted. Remember that when the second envelope that led to Edsa II was opened, they did not see any thing that would involve me in anything irregular," Estrada said.

A prosecution stalwart during Estrada's impeachment trial in 2001 after the senator-judges voted 11-10 not to open the so-called second envelope that purportedly linked him to "jueteng," an illegal numbers racket, sparked a people power uprising that forced him to step aside.

"The only difference in the two impeachment trials is that this time, Senate President [Juan Ponce] Enrile is very impartial and has declared that he would not allow a railroad," said Estrada, who went to the Senate for an exclusive interview with a cable TV channel.

"In my case, the presiding officer [was] in name of [then Chief Justice] Hilario Davide—was part of the conspiracy to remove me from office," he said.

A bombshell?

The seven-term politician said he would like the 22 senator-judges, including his son, Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada, in the Corona trial not to base their decision on political partisanship.

"That's what happened to me. I do not want this to happen to the Chief Justice [...]. To convict somebody without any strong evidence would be unfair," said the 74-year-old Estrada.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT Former President Joseph Estrada attends the Corona impeachment trial as guest commentator of Solar Entertainment. Estrada arrived before the start of the trial and left less than an hour into the proceedings.

"Senator-judges are mandated and have a responsibility toward the Filipino people. They must be fair and impartial," explained Estrada who was impeached for betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the Constitution.

Asked about the plea of Corona's prosecutors to present 188 witnesses, Estrada shrugged.

"They (prosecutors) might have a battlefield like those in my trial," he said, referring to Clarissa Ocampo of Equitable-PCI Bank who claimed she was acting as Lucio Tan's attorney-in-fact when he signed as Jane Yaptinchay in a specimen signature card for a bank account that purportedly contained jueteng collections.

Estrada scoffed at the charge during the interviews with the cable channel that Corona's wife Cristina once said that it's the devil-on-her-shoulder money, he would give it to the poor," he called, referring to the late Manila Archbishop Jaime Sin.

Hoodlums in robes

Estrada said he admired President Aquino "because he has the courage" to prosecute Corona.

He recalled that when he was the Vice President he campaigned against "hoodlums in robes"—corrupt magistrates who hindered the delivery of justice.

"If the three branches of government, usually you can criticize Malacañang and the legislature, but the Supreme Court was never attacked, even when there was a strong sentiment against a decision it issued," he noted.

No one above law

"It's above time they should also be censured because of their abuses," Estrada added.

Asked whether he sympathized with Corona, Estrada said, sadly: "Some presidents [and] some senior judges," annoyed with "big business release me I screwed" to oust him. He said some of these people had apologized to him.

"They learned their mistakes during my trial. It's a good thing that we all these happened. They are now more conscious of the mistakes they did before," Estrada said.

Lito Lapid question floors prosecution: Loan or cash advance?

By Cathy Yamsuan

SEN. ELIZABETH Sen. Lito Lapid unexpectedly took the floor for the first time in the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona yesterday with just one question.

Was the P11 million that Corona and wife Cristina purportedly took from Basa Holdings Enterprises for a loan or a cash advance?

By asking this, Lapid inadvertently made a prosecution admit he was not to prove that the Coronas possessed "unexplained wealth," a charge whose presentation the Senate-as-court is refusing to hear based on Article 11 of the impeachment complaint.

Lapid's question was not even addressed to the witness, Director Emilio Catanio of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Looking impatient, Lapid told Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile that he wanted the prosecution to explain why it had been grilling Catanio for more than an hour on whether Ma. Rosa Clarissa continued to exist.

Catanio testified that the company, supposedly owned by the family of Cristina Corona, had been inactive since 2001.

Improbable

Minders Oriental Rep. Rey Umali said the prosecution believed that it would be improbable for the Coronas to obtain a cash advance from an inactive company.

Umali added that since neither the Chief Justice nor his wife were shareholders of the company, "We could not understand. That's why we want this clarified here."

"So, it's no longer relevant whether the company closed

LAPID breaks silence.

or not? Or whether the couple borrowed [money]" Lapid asked in Filipino.

Umali explained that a company could only loan money after its board approved the application.

"There is a process that needs to be followed. There must be a board resolution that there is such resolution. And the SEC had indicated that Chief Justice Corona did[wasn't] aware of [Basa Holdings]," Umali said.

Enrile then asked the witness if the Coronas had been charged with violations of the Securities Regulation Code.

Catanio said he was not aware of any.

"If that's the case, are you telling me that you've been soliciting a lot of questions [causing Enrile] to say [although] and you've been here for several hours already just to make it appear that the P11 million was a loan? Or a cash advance," Lapid thundered.

Umali said the P11 million (considered a liability) was not reflected in Corona's statements of assets, liabilities and net worth from 2003 to 2009. This would be a violation of a government requirement for him to do so.

A buzz in gallery

The prosecutor added that even Cristina Corona who was supposedly engaged in real estate during that period, appeared not to have made tax payments to the Bureau of Internal Revenue as the time required.

"So, all of this is a puzzle to us. Where did the P11 million really come from? Because we are trying to establish here (the case of) unexplained wealth," Umali said.

The revelation caused a buzz in the gallery since the impeachment court already passed a resolution barring the prosecution from presenting evidence on paragraph 2.4 of Article 2 of the impeachment complaint that accused Corona of acquiring "ill-gotten wealth."

"That's all. Thank you very much," Lapid, looking elated as the surprise admission he had just elicited, the smiles and winks from colleagues, the former movie star retreated to his seat, which he rarely left to take the problem during regular recess.

Case of nondisclosure

"Is that the purpose of the prosecution?" Enrile queried Umali.

The prosecutor's disclosure also attracted the attention of the lead defense counsel, Jurist Cuevas.

"Unfortunate there was already a resolution denying the presentation from presenting evidence of unexplained wealth very clearly," Cuevas complained.

Sensing his mistake, Umali clutched his right fist near his face and declared:

"Your Honor, I clarify that the case is nondisclosure," he explained.

"What I mention overbody is respect the rulings of this court. We have already ruled that paragraph 2.4 is not pertinent to the case. We are not going to receive any proof. So kindly adhere to the rules of this court," Enrile reminded the prosecution.

Umali promptly offered an apology.

Visibly relieved, Enrile replied evenly and banged the gavel.

Reduction or discount, CJ's Bellagio purchase 'unethical'

By Cynthia D. Baluna

WHETHER it was a reduction or a discount, the fact that Chief Justice Renato Corona accepted the P10 million off the price of lot of Bridgeport Corp. for the Bellagio penthouse he was buying in 2009 violated the Canons of Judicial Ethics, according to a spokesperson of the House of Representatives' prosecution panel.

Deputy Speaker Erin Tañada said that regardless of the amount involved, the Chief Justice's acceptance of the 30%-discount property for the penthouse unit at a substantially reduced rate, which seriously put into question the propriety of a judge receiving a discount due to his position.

"It is clear under Canon 3.09 of the Canons of Judicial Ethics, judges are prohibited from receiving gifts in any form," Tañada said.

Neil Fernandez, Megaworld Corp. senior vice president for marketing and sales, testified on Tuesday that Corona supposedly was given a discount of P10 million because of the efforts of the global financial crisis and the Metropolitan Trial Court and the Regional Trial Court were disciplined for receiving P50,000.

"And what makes the P5-million discount received by Chief Justice Corona different?" Tañada asked.

Rodolfino City Rep. Miro Quimbo, the prosecution spokesperson, said it would now be up to the Senate impeachment court to appreciate the net value of the discount Megaworld had given to the Chief Justice.

'Badges of fraud'

"Our witnesses from Megaworld have testified that they really gave a special discount (to Corona). But like we said, we have proven that the net value of Chief Justice Corona is different," Quimbo said.

He maintained that the prosecution was able to establish the "badges of fraud" surrounding Corona's statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) from 2003 to 2010 as opposed to his lawful income.

Based on the evidence presented so far, Quimbo said Corona bought the Bellagio property for P54.1 million in 2009; a unit at Southforbes Ridge, also in Taguig City, for P9.1 million in 2006; and a unit at The Columns in Makati City for P3.8 million in 2008.

However, the prosecution noted that Corona undervalued the three properties by P16.9 million in his SALN and only declared those in his 2010 filing.

In his 2010 SALN, Corona declared that both the Bellagio property unit P6.8 million; Southforbes Ridge, P1.3 million; and The Columns, P1.2 million.

'Almost in cash'

Atty. Jose Joaquin Bautista, lead counsel for the impeachment court, said the Senate-as-court would be where Corona got all the money to buy the Bellagio property "almost in cash."

The prosecution earlier said it was considering requesting anew the impeachment court to subpoena Fort Bank's bulletproof limousine records used to pay for the the properties acquired by Corona as declared in his SALN.

Prosecution blindsided by witness' 'surprise' appearance

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prosecution was not expecting him until Wednesday.

It was Hernandez who provided the defense with fresh ammunition to counter the prosecution's claim of a P10-million discount given to Corona for the purchase of a 300.5-square-meter penthouse in The Bellagio at Southforbes Global City in Taguig City.

Hernandez maintained that Corona and his wife, Cristina, had merely availed themselves of a price "reduction."

Hernandez's testimony is seen as crucial in stemming the tide of public perception that the Chief Justice committed impropriety by purchasing the penthouse unit at a 30-percent discount.

Enrile, Cuevas insisted

It was defense lead counsel Serafin Cuevas who called the attention of presiding officer Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile as the beginning of the trial on Tuesday that the defense was willing to cross-examine the Megaworld executive.

The head of the prosecution panel, Rep. Niel Tupas Jr., protested since another witness, Benito Gozano of the Securities and Exchange Commission, had been thrown in as witness for the day and was already seated on the witness stand. (Gozano instead took the stand yesterday.)

But Enrile ordered Tupas to call Hernandez.

Since the prosecution was not aware of Hernandez's presence at the Senate, it was not able to confer with him before the direct examination.

Aurora Rep. Juan Edgardo Angara, a prosecution spokesperson, said the prosecution team from the House of Representatives "was surprised because the witness only arrived at 2 p.m. Tuesday."

"[We] expected [him] but he was supposed to be presented [on Wednesday], but JEE and Cuevas insisted he be presented" on Tuesday, Angara said.

Reduced or discount

The price of the property was P24 million but because it was purportedly mentioned "several times" due to a typhoon, Megaworld lowered the price to P19.6 million, according to Hernandez.

Since Corona paid the property in less than a year, the company gave him a P5-million discount, Hernandez said, thus claiming that Corona received only a regular 15-percent discount.

"From P24 million, it's basically P20 million," Hernandez said. The unit was eventually sold to Corona's wife Cristina in September 2009 for only P14.5 million.

Enrile, who was presiding over the trial, explained that a "reduced" price was different from a discounted price.

'Out of this air'

"So you have a situation where the court jumped the gun on the prosecution," said a member of the House prosecution team who asked not to be named since he was not authorized to speak on the issue.

"Of course, we were surprised to see him (Hernandez). He was installed out of thin air," the lawmaker said.

The job of examining the surprise witness fell on private prosecutor Joseph Jerome Hosaka, the lawyer in charge of cases dealing with the Megaworld properties of the Coronas.

"This explains why there appeared hesitation in examining Hernandez, but thankfully he saved the day for us," the lawmaker said.

But it was not an easy task for the young Hosaka who was reprimanded by Enrile for employing a line of questioning that resulted in "impunde" his witness.

Unanswered questions

The circumstances surrounding the purchase of The Bellagio penthouse unit have continued to confound senator-judges since the Hernandez testimony had elicited more questions than answers.

When grilled obviously by Senators Angelo Cayetano III and Francis Pangilinan and Senate President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada, Hernandez couldn't provide a straight answer to some of the vexing questions related to Corona's purchase.

Hernandez couldn't say for sure whether Megaworld had filed an insurance claim over the supposed "natural damage."

The witness was also unsure if there was a damage incident report to corroborate his claim, when asked by Pangilinan.

Under questioning by Osmeña, Hernandez admitted that the P10-million "reduction" in price was not a "huge loan" to Megaworld, but its ramifications when his claim was repeatedly challenged by Osmeña.

Hernandez, who said he was privy to the pricing and discounts given to prospective unit buyers at Megaworld projects, could not reveal to the court the date of the actual turnover of the unit to Corona, and appeared to be evasive when asked about the basic formula coming from what he learned in a "term loan" sent when it was turned over to the buyers.

Evasive

Osmeña couldn't hide his displeasure over the evasiveness of Hernandez.

"Essentially the developer will not turn over a unit that is not finished and not up to specifications[sic]. Because the consumer would ill suffer the representations and warranties, particularly in a condominium unit, and we doubt very much if you have been very accurate this afternoon," the senator said.

Osmeña asked the court to compel Hernandez to produce various documents supporting his assertions.

It was established during the testimony of Hernandez that there are 20 penthouse units at The Bellagio at Rockwell The Bellagio. There are two units per floor.

Megaworld sold the units to different buyers at different times, prompting the court to ask for the original price list of the penthouse unit.

President denies sending emissary to Cuevas

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Aquino yesterday denied sending anyone to retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Serafin Cuevas to make an offer in exchange for his dropping out as head of the defense in Chief Justice Renato Corona's impeachment trial.

The President not only named the denial but also stressed that he had nothing more to say on the matter.

"Frankly this issue is not worthy of any comment," he told reporters after attending the Philippine Information Agency's 25th anniversary celebration in its office in Quezon City.

Mr. Aquino was reacting to an Inquirer report quoting Cuevas as claiming that Malacañang had sent an emissary to ask him to quit as Corona's chief defense lawyer in exchange for the dropping of charges against Maguindanao Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu and other members of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Both Cuevas and Gadtula are members of the influential religious group, Iglesia ni Cristo (INC).

No connection

Mr. Aquino ordered the prosecution of Gadtula on the recommendation of a Department of Justice fact-finding body which found him involved in the kidnapping of and extortion from a Japanese national.

Inquirer's yesterday asked the President if the INC had links to Gadtula.

He did not directly answer the question, only saying that there was "no connection" between the case of Gadtula and the impeachment trial.

Mr. Aquino also said Gadtula's case was now under preliminary investigation, where the latter "can defend himself."

"I'm my (part), I have lost my trust and confidence in the person," he said of Gadtula.

What evidence shows

Asked if the INC had anything to do with the Gadtula case, the President said: "Justice here is not based on the desires of any persons or group of persons. Justice has to be based by what the evidence shows us, and that is what we're trying to do here."

In response to a question about his relationship with the INC, he said it was "OK" and "good."

"We're talking with each other," he said.

Asked why it seemed that the INC was involved in the Gadtula case, Mr. Aquino said his lawyers would point out the connection "if there is a connection although we have had yet been stated.

"So I think that is just an opinion rather than a fact," he said.

CJ got ₱11-million cash from 'dead' firm of wife's family

From page A1

ordered and therefore, the only action that can be taken by Banc Ed there (was) just to liquidate and wind up the affairs of the corporation and distribute the shares," Atty. Bernadette Umali told the impeachment court.

Prosecutors presented Director Renato Catanar of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to show that the company was no longer in a position to refuse money to Corona.

The approach puzzled some of the senators, who questioned the relevance of Banc Ed there being "dead" to the charge that Corona did not publicly disclose his SALN and because of that, should be convicted of culpable violation of the Constitution.

Said Senator Jinggoy Estrada: "If you are not sure of your evidence, do not present it."

The P11-million cash advance here was classified as liability in Corona's SALNs for 2003 and 2004. It was later reduced to P10 million in the 2005 SALN. He still has in 2006, 06-5 million in 2007, 07-5 million in 2008 and P5 million in 2009. The unexplained decrease indicated that he was paying off the cash advance.

Edralin, head of the SEC's company registration and monitoring department, testified that the commission revoked Banc Ed there's certificate of registration on May 16, 2003.

He said the company had not been submitting records such as financial reports and general information sheets from 1992 up to the year of revocation.

Catanar added that Corona's wife, Cristina, was neither a stockholder nor a director of the company, which was registered on May 30, 1968.

Exotic lecture

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, the presiding officer in the impeachment trial, rebuffed Catanar after the latter said that Banc Ed there had its registration revoked could still be revived.

To which Enrile replied: "Therefore, it is not dissolved. If it's dissolved, you kill it. You cannot revive it."

The issue was on contentions that Enrile ordered Catanar to submit a legal memorandum explaining the SEC's authority to dissolve a corporation.

"I'm not imposing my opinion on this, although I entertain a great doubt whether it has the authority to dissolve a corporation," Enrile said.

"What will be the status of a corporation in dissolution and after the dissolution, what will be the status of the assets of the corporation? My recollection is in that case it becomes a matter of ascertaining by the stockholders."

Relevance

Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano and Sen. Loren Legarda both questioned the relevance of the company's supposed dissolution in 2003 to Corona's alleged nondisclosure of his SALN. Cayetano said that a company, even if considered "dead," could still "bind money."

Enrile cut Umali short when the prosecution began objecting that the issue was related to the "nondisclosure" of Corona's disclosures in his SALNs.

"What is controlled if the question is did (the corporation or body or group of persons bind money that is reflected in the SALN of the respondent?" the senator said.

Umali explained that since Banc Ed there's corporate franchise had already been revoked, all it was authorized to do was to liquidate its assets. Enrile told him: "We've been taking your opinion into consideration. You have not established the connection of what you are saying with the present proceeding."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson called attention to the SEC order that Banc Ed there could still file a "petition to lift revocation" until May 26, 2013.

"What is the status of the corporation between May 26, 2003, and May 26, 2013? Is it dead? Or could it still be resuscitated?" he asked.

Catanar said the company could still be revived. But he said the initial revocation was "already effective because subject crooks, there was no sense in working it."

He said the opportunity given to a company to petition for revival was intended to "finalize the order but it's already effective."

Erroneous presumption

The head defense counsel, Serafin Cuevas, cited a May 3, 1993, SEC opinion saying that a company "shall continue to exist as a juridical entity, notwithstanding its operational status, until its certificate of registration is formally revoked by the SEC after due notice and hearing."

"This honorable court has erroneous presumption, your honor, that the nonissuance there is a certificate of revocation, is a corporation cannot do any business anymore. That is not true, even in actuality," Cuevas said.

Umali "took exception to the statement" and cited a separate SEC opinion dated July 28, 2008. She read the opinion, which stated: "We clarified that an order of revocation is immediately effective once the revocation order is issued as such subject corporation existence is terminated at the very least."

In response to a question by Sen. Pia Cayetano, Umali said the prosecution was trying to establish that the P11-million cash advance was "fictitious" because the Corona couple were the shareholders of the corporation.

No formal acceptance

The prosecution also presented Herbert Josef of Continental Investment Inc. (CII) in an attempt to show that a call deposit or convertible note that CII belonged to Chief Justice Renato Corona and his wife Cristina.

But under questioning from defense lawyer Kristian Ranjev, Josef could not ascertain if the Corona couple had received the key to the unit, with a selling price of P3.38 million and a market zonal value of P2.66 million, or if they had lived there.

Inquirer's look-into of a letter from the CII addressed to Cristina informing her that Unit 31 B was "deemed delivered and accepted" by the purchaser as of June 7, 2006, but Josef said there was no record of formal acceptance from her.

NO RECORD OF FORMAL ACCEPTANCE. says Herbert H. Josef of Continental Investments Inc.

AN EMBARRASSMENT. Chief Justice Renato Corona of the Securities and Exchange Commission, gets an Wednesday reassurance from a corporation it dissolved.

Defense opposes subpoena on banks: It's 'fishing expedition'

From page A1

"Why should the Chief Justice be 'bashful' if he really won the raffle? If he's just lucky is it a sin? I don't think there's a problem with that or if any law was violated," said Tarlac Rep. Jesse Robredo. Umali told the impeachment court.

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He said the company had not

PSBank cites bank secrecy law

PHILIPPINE Savings Bank (PSBank), the thrift banking arm of the Metrobank group, said on Wednesday it was required by law to keep confidential all client accounts under its foreign currency deposit unit (FCDU).

An FCDU is a banking unit authorized to transact in foreign exchange, such as accepting foreign currency deposits and making foreign currency loans.

The bank issued the statement in response to requests about an alleged secret US dollar account kept in PSBank by Chief Justice Renato Corona, who is on trial as the Senate impeachment court.

PSBank president Pascual Garcia III said the public must be reminded of the provisions in the Foreign Currency Deposit Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 6426), specifically Section 6 (Secrecy of foreign currency deposits).

The provision says: "All foreign currency deposits authorized under this Act are hereby declared as and considered of an absolutely confidential nature and, except upon the written permission of the depositor, in no instance shall such foreign currency deposits be examined, inquired or looked into by any person, government official, bureau or office whether judicial or administrative or private."

"Therefore, any inquiry on any dollar deposit account by any party is a violation of this law," Garcia said. —David C. Dumlao

but failed to certify on the authenticity of the documents submitted by the bank.

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TV network

In a statement, Ramon Esguerra, one of Corona's lawyers, claimed that a "network and its execs" were helping the prosecutors in destroying Corona's credibility by allowing them to discuss evidence which were not formally presented in the Senate impeachment court.

"What the prosecution is doing in the media is gross disgusting." Esguerra said in Filipino.

"We have an impeachment court precisely because we want to try the case here and not resort to what the prosecutors had been doing since the start. The Chief Justice has the right like any other man in this Cruz," he continued.

Esguerra also raised concern over a news article posted on ABS-CBN's news website which quoted unnamed Senate prosecutors who claimed that Corona was maintaining a seven-dollar account.

Esguerra assailed Bello Boy-Saul Tupaz Jr., the House lead prosecutor, for talking about the merits of the case when he went on the "The Correspondents" program. ANC is the cable news channel of the Lopez-owned ABS-CBN.

"If that is how the prosecutors and their media associates handle the impeachment, we cannot help but feel that the act of the Senate is already being undermined," Esguerra said. "Imagine having two trials: [in] the Senate and (before) the public," aided by some (media) associates."

Senate lawyer said "we might as well ... stop this charade or stop the live (media) coverage of the hearings so we stop the pandering, innuendos and spins" if Corona "will be pilloried publicly on so-called evidence never presented or entered into the trial."

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

A mangrove shield against storm surges

NATURAL BARRIER The new mangrove plantation, started in 2009 in Cagsao, Calabanga, Camarines Sur, is just recently expanding because visitors pitch in to plant mangrove seedlings. | INQUIRER

By Jose Bacasdre Jr.
Calabanga, Camarines Sur

WITH OVER FIVE hectares of green canopy rising and creeping above the shallow tidal flat, a mangrove plantation in Calabanga town in Camarines Sur has been attracting volunteers since 2009.

The mangrove project in Cagsao, 38 kilometers northeast of Naga City, is part of the community's disaster risk reduction and mitigation plan, according to its barangay chair, Fernand Ma. Asis.

Cagsao, a coastal village highly vulnerable to storm surge sits on the side of a steep hill below, dropping to the narrow Hinulsan Estuary. Estuary. 1,600 people, mostly fishermen. In all, 770 families are clustered in seven zones, 25 of them living in front of the mangrove plantation.

Ms. Asis said the project is one of the small-scale measures undertaken by the community so it could have a natural buffer against storm surges.

Jason Constantino, of the Corporate Network for Disaster Response (CNDR), provided the propagules or mangrove seedlings and other materials while volunteers from the community took care of planting them, he said. The CNDR, composed of 15 corporations, aims to institutionalize disaster management efforts of the business community.

Volunteers

Ms. Asis said the villagers had provided food to the volunteers who plant the seedlings. Nurturing of the growing plants is the work of the barangay and municipal government.

Since last year, students, teachers, health professionals and a number of foreigners from development organizations have come in droves to visit Cagsao to help plant some 50,000 seedlings.

Neves Ojascoa Concepcion, head of Ateneo's Community Partnership Public Affairs Group, observed how the local population is swarmed to the shores near the first seedlings were planted in 2009.

"The community can now even embark on an ecotourism project to showcase the successful practice of mangrove reforestation," she said.

LGU role

Credit must go to the villagers and their officials, and the municipal government for the success of the project, Concepcion said.

"The community has a very high awareness of disaster risk reduction and mitigation concepts," said Concepcion, who espoused a high 90-percent survival rate of the propagules.

She remembered how a storm surge once leveled seven hectares of mayflies and recounted the passageway of the hideous fever overnight into Sea Miguel Bay. The tidal flat became ideal for the mangrove reforestation project, said Concepcion.

Ms. Asis noted how the thriving mangroves also dramatically increased the stocks of crabbies in Cagsao. This, he said, prompted a ban on the gathering of crabs inside the plantation area.

To ward off gatherers of crabbies, he said they assigned nine caretakers to patrol the fenced mangrove plantation and deter away gatherers from the neighboring villages. The caretakers, who get paid P450 honorarium by the mayor, quite often come up trash, mostly plastic materials, entwined around the young mangrove trees, said Mayor Evelyn Fa.

NGOs

A fisherman said that during the cold season, he may earning P250 or double of what he used to earn before. Traders buy the crabs at P40 to P60 per kilo, he said.

Another fisherman said the thriving mangroves enhanced production of krill, a rice material used to make fish paste, which, in turn, gave him extra income, especially when he could not go out to Burias to fish during bad weather.

Ms. Asis said in 2010, Care Philippines gave the villagers a series of training on disaster awareness and response measures. Later, a program called Enhancing Safe Community and Environment Against Disaster (Ascend) improved the community's capacity to protect the mangroves.

Ascend featured the construction of a gabion structure at the edge of the village center to prevent storm surges and to protect more than a hundred houses facing San Miguel Bay.

Humanitarian aid

Ms. Asis said that upon Ascend's phaseout last year, the CNDR-led Project Strengthening Assets and Capacities of Communities and Local Governments for Resilience to Disaster (Ascend) took over.

Funded by the European Commission's humanitarian aid, Ascend aims to strengthen the capability of Cagsao to manage the reforestation project.

To date, mangrove forms various organizations continue to help the community respond to disasters. The efforts have resulted in 108 villagers grouping into committees and training to handle various tasks should a disaster strike Cagsao.

Four pieces of barangay, an empty cogon lands used as a training shelter wherever an emergency shelter must exist, are scattered around the village.

Fruit bounty inspires festival

By Marivar Cleve
Siling, Cavite

SAMTOL, kaong and Batulaonan are names not simply plucked out of excellence for some villages in Siling, Cavite, but these names to the abundance of fruits, as well as vegetables, in a town naturally blessed with lush greenery, rich volcanic soil and cool climate.

Farmers have long enjoyed the bounty of locally grown coconuts, corn, bananas, pineapple, mango, tamarind and other fruits. "When you ask students in [Dasmariñas de la Medalla, they'll tell you that fruits are sweet and delicious if they come from Siling," said Merlinda Samtol-Saulidon, 46, a produce-turned tourist-arbor family crusty citizen.

Although popularly known for its luscious produce, Siling has never formally claimed to be a major producer of fruits being exported to Manila and other provinces. But spurred on a firm class municipality (annual income over P50 million). It is still considered an agricultural town with 50-40 percent of its population engaged in farming.

In recent years and in a result of industrialization and land conversions, "people, specially the younger generations, seemed to have lost interest in agriculture," Saulidon said.

For many generations, her husband Ramon, Celebrate Asuncion, teacher Ana Benevilla and Councilor Emilia Pelobello the idea of organizing "a festival of what we are already known for."

The first Siling Durian Festival was launched on Jan. 22 and will run for 11 days as part of Siling's Bonta in honor of its patron saint, the Nuestra Señora de Candelaria, on Feb. 2.

"The festival is our way of thanking the land and celebrating a bountiful harvest. It aims to preserve the cultural heritage of Siling, promote tourism and improve local economy, and create a product identity for the town," Ramon said.

As fellow was expected to include eight's cultural presentations, singing and dance competitions at the plaza, food parade, street dancing and a variety show.

Councilor Ivy Reyes said she believed the Durian Festival would bring back the farmers' "love for the land" to still that town used to smack. She recalled that in the 1970s, agriculture was the main livelihood that "enabled the farmers to send their children to school."

Moreover praised during the '80s and '90s, but those began dwindling in 2000.

"We've seen the effects. Most farmers slaughtered their fruit bearers and sold away their lands. They were hard to other jobs that brought instant money," Reyes said.

According to municipal agriculturist Adelio Robles, 75 percent of the town's revenues come from agriculture, primarily from the production of Robusta coffee, pineapple, banana, cassava and coconut.

"The first festival could just be the start of more fruitful events," Reyes said.

HOMETOWN Inquirer

Across the NATION

DENR stops Lingayen black sand mining

By Gabriel Cardenas and Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) has stopped black sand extraction in coastal villages in the Pangasinan capital of Lingayen after it issued a cease-and-desist order to the firm contracted by the provincial government and to Gov. Amado Espino Jr. on Jan. 26 and 30.

Salisay village Council Member Vicente Filipino, spokesperson of the Lingayen residents who were opposing the sand mining, said road extraction and hauling by Sydtar Builders stopped on Jan. 25.

He said some workers left the area but their equipment have yet to be removed.

Hills of extracted black sand in the village are ready for hauling but Coast Guard personnel have started guarding a barge docked near Malimpuac village, which reminds Inquirer would be used to ship out the black sand, Filipino said.

In a letter on Jan. 26, Joel Salvacion, Ilocos director of EMB, an agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, told Lucas Bolitoy of Sydtar Builders that the province's Interdepartmental Committee on Environment (ICE).

Salvador also wrote Espino, saying "without the ECC for the project of developing a golf course area, rehab is part of the ecotourism project of [Dingalan], [would] also be covered by an ECC.

"As proponent of the project, please be advised that your office has already secured an approved ECC before the implementation of the project," Salvador said.

On Jan. 16, a group of village officials and residents of Lingayen went to the Office of the Ombudsman-Luzon and provincial officials said the firm is ordered to the black sand quarrying for allegedly violating environment and antigraft laws and the Local Government Code.

But Provincial Administrator Rafael Baraan, in a press conference on Monday, said the extraction of black sand from the coastal areas of Barangay Dulangan and part of Barangay Baligan was "incidental."

"We want them to build a golf course and not to look for black sand," he said.

He said the planned golf course was one of the components of the ecotourism zone being developed in the 200-hectare provincial government property that spans four coastal villages facing the Lingayen Gulf.

Baraan also said the extraction has been cleared by the MGB and Environment Bureau (EMB).

He said the project's critics may be referring to what he called "illegal and irresponsible" black sand mining to the coastal areas of La Union and Ilocos provinces.

He said MGB had confirmed that there are no pending applications for magnetite or black sand quarrying in Ilocos, unless while there are 13 pending applications in La Union, 17 in Ilocos Sur and 56 in Ilocos Norte.

Baraan said a Korean businessman conglomerate has agreed to invest in an industrial and recreational complex within the ecotourism zone.

ILLUSION
Scenes like this are common in Madrid, painting a picture of everyday in a riskiest-watched province. JOSE CARLO LAZO/INQUIRER.COM PH

Law banning open dumps barely enforced in Bicol

By Mar S. Arguelles
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—Only 36 of 114 cities and towns in Bicol have complied with a law that bans open dumps, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Analiza Marcial Feigalde, DENR regional executive director, said 80 local government units in the region continue to violate the Solid Waste Management Act.

Feigalde said her team pushing for the enforcement of a "Kalinisan" policy against LGUs that continue to violate the law.

According to Feigalde, DENR records identified the erring LGUs as Jose Panganiban, Mindoro and Palanas in Masbate and Buenavista and Tiwi in Albay.

"These local government units were already served with the final notice but they failed to comply," said Feigalde.

Records at the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the DENR showed 79 LGUs in the Bicol had been issued "first notice notices" for violating the law.

Bicol produces 950,400 cubic tons of garbage a year or 2,532 tons of waste a day. Government first purchases 500 tons of waste per day: Albay, 336 tons; Masbate, 251 tons; Sorsogon, 213 tons; Camarines Norte, 134 tons and Catanduanes, 70 tons, said Feigalde, quoting a study made by EMB.

The DENR study said the amount of waste produced by Bicol is about 1 percent of the amount of garbage that the country produces.

Feigalde said small towns that lack funds to build sanitary landfills would get help from DENR.

In Bicol, the EMB study said, only 36 LGUs segregate waste.

Fuentebella says report on truck is 'falsehood'

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAGA CITY—Deputy Speaker Arnaldo Fuentebella described as a falsehood a report saying the small truck loaded with soil and other materials that was stopped in a village in Gumaus Law was carrying filling materials for a resort in the town.

In a letter to the Inquirer on Jan. 27, Fuentebella, through lawyer Jose Miguel Palanca, said the report (which came out in the Inquirer on Jan. 19 was "replete with falsehood and was clearly intended to malign the Fuentebella family."

"The 10-ton truck was not loaded with filling materials which were granted from Barangay Pamihan," said the letter.

It said "the filling materials enforced to in the article were actually debris brought about by landslides which occurred due to continuous rains in Sabang, Camarines Sur."

"The 10 truck was in fact, hired by Barangay Pamihan in order to remove the rock slumps and earth which clogged Kilometer 72 and the drainage canal therein," added the letter.

The clearing operation was part of the local government unit's disaster mitigation activity, it said the letter.

Referring to a portion of the Jan. 19 report that read: "The truck was found by Partido Conservation, a firm reportedly owned by the family of Fuentebella," Palanca said that consensy to the report. "the 10 truck was a property of Partido Conservation, a company which is owned by Atty. Peter."

Cops on guard to keep danger zones empty

DAGUHAN DE ORO CITY—Police were sent to prevent the return of poor families to a community here that suffered deadly floods on Dec. 17 destruction that struck this city and Iligan City and which had been declared as state land.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez said police were sent to Isla de Oro, a landfill that once hosted 10,000 people but was emptied when the disaster caused many communities from the map and killed nearly 2,000 people in the area, Northern Mindanao (Min).

The congressman said two teams of police from the Cagayan de Oro City Public Safety Company are to take turns in guarding for 24 hours the entrance to the enclave at the mouth of the Cagayan River.

Isla de Oro has been declared a no habitation zone by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) after the Dec. 17 disaster as the height of Tropical Storm "Sendong" brought up to 30-feet deep floods that swallowed houses and killed hogs that crushed people to their deaths.

Disaster built on the mud has been washed out to sea, with many of their occupants on Dec. 17.

The city's water and power utility firms removed services from the enclave to discourage people from returning to their washed out communities.

The Cagayan de Oro City Police District removed pipes connecting Isla de Oro to its main distribution lines while the Cagayan Electric Power and Light Company Inc. uprooted electric posts and cut power lines to the enclave.

Allowing people to return to Isla de Oro, said Rodriguez, was like "courting disaster."

"Let's obey the government," said the congressman. "It's for your safety. The government is looking after your safety, so please let's not return to the area. Everything will be left residents when he came to visit the condition recently.

The soldiers were allowed to return to Isla de Oro only to retrieve whatever remained of their belongings.

Rodriguez said the city will be enclosed to prevent floods of the same magnitude as that which struck the city on Dec. 17.

He said not would be removed from the riverbed and dumped on its banks to prevent water from breaking into the city during heavy rains.

Residents would still be allowed to enter the area for livelihood, said Rodriguez.

He said he was planning to build a memorial there where people can converge while mourning the spread.

"There must be a common ground for them," Rodriguez said. *Bobby Lagsa, Inquirer Mindanao*

POLICE on rescue boats from Isla de Oro leave after the prayer ceremonies and several others in Cagayan de Oro City were hit by the Dec. 17 disaster that also struck Iligan City. ALVIN KASIM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

NEWSBRIEFS

■ BACOLOD CITY

Soldiers killed

TWO SOLDIERS were killed while another was wounded in a clash with communist guerrillas on Tuesday in Cadiz City, Negros Occidental.

The clash came after soldiers claimed they had come as rebel camps in Sipalay City.

Soldiers belonging to the 62nd Infantry Battalion were on patrol in Cadiz City when they encountered a group of rebels, leading to the clash.

The military said Pfc. Engrs Pyan Tolentin and Pfc. Kenrick Bas were killed. Sgt. Alfredo Ibañez Jr. was wounded and is in stable condition in a hospital here.

The Cadiz City clash came two days after soldiers said they rescued two rebel camps in Sipalay City and killed a rebel.

Cecil P. Suson, Inquirer Visayas

■ LUCENA CITY

QPHS reunion

THE BLAZERS Provincial High School (QPHS) batch of 1972 is calling for a reunion of class members on Feb. 11-12 which is goldenin dubbed as "Todd Na Dekada Na, Humobdens Pa."

Illness and incapacitation are by are scheduled on Feb. 11 at the Quezon Hills grounds here.

On Feb. 12, class members and their families will gather at the QPHS grounds. A motorcade in Lucban, Dolores, and picnic at the Bahia Kanyon Resort will follow.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala is president of QPHS class of 1972. Perla T. Mallari-Ah, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ ZAMBALES

Diaz's legacy

THE LATE Rep. Antonio Diaz has left a legacy of education for students of northern the second district of Zambales.

In a statement, the family of legend the late congressman has named the bag "father of the Province Magsaysay Technological University (MATU), the only state university in Zambales.

The commencement said Diaz worked tirelessly to fund the education of Zambales' poor youth in MATU.

The late congressman's daughter, was running for her father's seat in special election, but vowed to keep Diaz's legacy alive.

■ EVENTS

War on trafficking

TWO GROUPS helping combat human trafficking in the Philippines have entered into an agreement to work closely together to improve the trafficking of women and children from Western and Eastern Samar.

In a statement, the groups Multinational Challenge to Invest in Philippines (MCA-P) and Visayan Forum Foundation Inc. said the partnership is an attempt to "complement's call for cooperation in the war on trafficking.

The agreement, signed MCA-P managing director and chief executive officer Ms. Victoria Abcede-on, "is only an initial but nonetheless a significant step toward building on project areas against this modern-day slavery that victimizes mostly the poorest members of our society."

■ BENGUET

6 arrested

POLICE said they arrested six men caught in the act of selling stolen motorcycle parts in separate raids in La Trinidad, Benguet.

Chief Supt. Leonardo Espina, head of the Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group, said the six were arrested in an entrapment operation.

They were identified as Augusto Ibanez, 32, of Sto. Tomas, Union; John Gregory Pulmas, 31, of Rizal, Baguio City; Ramil Dondangal, 18, of Mankayan; Benguet; Edmund Ankay, 21, and AJ Lacsichel Ngaling, 19, both of Irisan, Baguio City; and John Paraiso, 23, of East Santos Hill, Baguio City. JIJ Fer

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendrez
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ortuoa

SPORTS

Elite PSC list of 150 athletes known today

By Jose Marasco

AFTER going through a stringent screening process, the Philippine Sports Commission will announce today the 150 elite athletes who will get lucrative training for the next Southeast Asian Games.

PSC chair Richie Garcia said the traditional gold medalists of the last SEAG in Indonesia, except for some old, overweight winners, will head the select group tasked to spearhead the country's campaigns in the 2013 edition of the biennial meet in Myanmar.

An initial budget of P150 million will be allocated for the training, international exposure and allowances of the athletes, Garcia said.

"Gold medalists in the SEA Games made the list except the overaged athletes," said Garcia, who will formally announce the members of the favored crop during the PSC assembly today.

The PSC top honcho said the program aims to produce 60-70 gold medals in the Myanmar games.

The Philippines entered as a second best ninth overall with 36 gold medals, 56 silvers and 77 bronzes in the Indonesian meet three months ago.

"We're forming an elite model athletes because they're tested. Full support through allowances, nutrition, foreign training and exposure will be provided," said Garcia.

But Garcia said members of the elite group won't be allowed to take another job. "Either you serve as full-time athlete or you're no one."

Completion ng the project is a long-term program anchored on 30 priority sports to be identified by the PSC and the POC.

Garcia said the agency will soon announce the list of shortlisted disciplines, which are expected to produce future Olympic medalists and world champions.

Powerade franchise back with San Miguel

By Marvin R. Castillo

THE SAN MIGUEL group may have just added a fourth team in the PBA with its recent reacquisition of the Coca-Cola bottling company.

This was learned by the Inquirer from a very unimpeachable company source after PAL president Ramon S. Ang reportedly met and closed a deal with Coca-Cola Philippines' CEO Bill Schafer recently.

The San Miguel group actually used to own Coca-Cola before selling it in 2004.

Sen. Ed Ang's deal now for SMC to have a right-of-first-refusal should the present Coca-Cola management decide to sell the franchise, which SMC is now considering.

At the same time, the local executives of Coca-Cola, which played as Powerade and Sta. Mesa a surprising second to Talk 'N Text in the Philippine Cup last Sunday, are desperately trying to keep the Tigers' executives the opportunity of matching the Ang and the Schafer.

Details of the purchase are being kept on the vague though the increase also hinted that SMC has already made a payment to Tebodin in what could be the highest amount ever paid for a PBA franchise.

The Barako Bull squad was the last franchise that was put up for sale, with Red Lion's Willy Lim saying that the right buyer will be close to P50 million last year with George Chua still retaining part ownership.

San Miguel's purchase of the Coca-Cola franchise is reportedly partly double that amount, more so after the Tigers were deep into the playoffs and unveiled several superstars in the making in their lineup.

Selling the franchise has been in the minds of the foreign management of Coca-Cola for the past couple of years.

The source said the Tigers will reportedly remain intact until the end of the current season.

With Ginny David and cookie Marcio Lassiter and JV Cruz blooming into superstars, Coca-Cola/Powerade can take in some more money by coaching nothing before the SMC takeover granted that it wasn't included in the sale.

San Miguel already has Ronnie Magsanoc, Biboy and Ramgoolam Ginebra in the PBA, and should this deal be consummated, there will be only a total of four companies/personalities owning the 10 teams in the league.

Manny V. Pangilinan owns the Tropang Texters and Meralco, while Sen. now Mr. Ed and Barako Bull.

Only billionaire Wilfred Steven Uytengsu of Alaska and the Yuchengco's Yo Yong Gee Jaucian of Rain or Shine remain as the only owners with just one team in the PBA.

ASPIRANTS CUP

NLEX favored vs Freego five

By Jeanine W. Poyo

THERE is no meeting this season rescheduled **into a rematch.**

But even if NLEX is favored to pull off a repeat, the Road Warriors know for a much improved Freego down at the start of the PBA D-League Aspirants' Cup championship series today in the Tiendesitas Sports Arena in Pasig.

"They swept Cebuana, so they're a strong team," NLEX coach Boyet Fernandez said of the Jason Shakers, who stunned the No. 1 Gems with a semifinal sweep.

"They're a very good team right now and they've been together for a long time. We expect it will be difficult, but we'll be ready."

Game 1 of the best-of-three title series is set at 3 p.m.

The defending champion Road Warriors had to go through the full distance in dispatching Big Chill in the semifinals and Freego coach Leo Austria thinks this might work in their favor.

"Sabi nga the layaway is our as that's a good advantage for us," said Austria. "But we really have nothing to lose. We're the underdogs since the semifinal started."

The two finalists only met once in the eliminations, where the top-seeded Road Warriors rolled past the Jason Shakers, 78-59.

The Road Warriors are aiming for their Bogaserve sixth worry stars BU Garcia, Calvin Abueva, Ian Sangalang, Garvo Lanete, Dave Marcelo joining hands with Filipino-American standout Cliff Hodge and Chris Ellis.

"It's irresponsible for us to count up with their one and all-Americans," said Austria. "But if we could execute well, anything could happen."

This tournament is what the Jason Shakers hope to bank on with their core built around veterans lieutenant players Lester Alvarez, Alex Stephen, Eric Camson and Austin Marquez.

DRIVING Hordart (left) and NLEX begin their title quest against Eric Camson and the rest of Freego's pack.

SCHNOCK: Doubtful

Key Azkals to miss AFC Challenge Cup

By Cedell P. Tupas

THE PHILIPPINE Azkals will again be deprived of the best possible talent for the AFC Challenge Cup next month in Nepal.

Filipino-Danish striker Lorenzo Antal goalkeeper Neil Etheridge have been ruled out of the March 9 to 13 event, while Stephan Schrock is doubtful because of club commitments.

But Azkals manager Dan Palami said there is a big possibility that Philadelphia playmaker Phil Younghusband and Fil-Danish fullback Daisuke Cagara would be available for the matches.

Nhlanhi also said that the injury to Chieffy Caligdong was not serious as everyone had feared and the influential winger could be back in action before the Challenge Cup.

Mulders will miss the training camp in Dubai starting next week, but will be released during the fourth stint. AFC Cup Hong for the Challenge Cup, Palami said.

Cagara, who impressed in the 4-0 win over Nepal last year, has signified his intention to reinforce the team in Nepal.

"Kerry's club seems to us saying he can't be released because they are preparing for important matches," said Palami.

Etheridge will be available for the Feb. 19 friendly against Malaysia at the Rizal Memorial Stadium, but will be unavailable for the Challenge Cup because of his commitment to English club Portsmouth.

Filipino-German Roland Muller will be tapped in Etheridge's absence.

Ally Borromeo, the captain and lead central defender, will also miss the Challenge Cup because of an ACL injury, leaving Rob Gier, James Sobre and Filipino-Spanish Juan Luis Guirado to man the backline.

Vazquez not awed by Donaire status

DONAIRE

WILFREDO Vazquez Jr., acknowledged what a "great athlete" Nonito Donaire Jr. is, but the Puerto Rican former WBO super bantamweight champion said the Filipino knockout artist "is superhuman."

The 27-year-old from Bayamon, Puerto Rico, trying to shove out of the shadow of his three-division world champion father, said Bomingzone.com upon arrival in San Antonio, Texas, Tuesday that he feels confident of regaining the WBO crown.

Donaire, who is ranked highly in most pound-for-pound lists, arrived in San Antonio ahead of Vazquez in preparation for their Feb. 1 title bout at the Alamodome.

"It's a challenge, no question," Vazquez, who has the title in Mexican Jorge Arce last year, was quoted as saying. "But it's also a chance to demonstrate what I'm capable of. More importante is that I get the chance to fight for my title, which belongs to me.

"He (Donaire) is a great athlete, but not a superhero like they want him to be. But he's humble and (announcement) good when we met. He's earned what he has but nothing can be here."

Vazquez also downplayed reports that he initially didn't meet the weight during a pre-weigh-in last week, and told the website that he's sure to 129 lb five days before the fight. Marc Anthony Reyes

Patafa eyes priority funding status

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE Amateur Track and Field Association is hoping to get included in the list of priority sports which will be ensured of sufficient funding from the government.

With long jump queen Marestella Torres unfortunately qualified in the coming London Olympics, Patafa president Go Teng Kok recently said they are lobbying for priority funding for this year's programs, which includes hiring two top-notch foreign coaches and sending athletes for long-term training abroad.

Go hinted that he is talking to Philippine Sports Commission chair Jolly Gomez, who had earlier pledged help to ensure the Philippine field ties an exclusive track and field stadium.

"We need to be included in the priority sports because for the past two years, we've been sports with most number of gold medals," said Go.

A consistent gold medal winner in the SEA Games, Patafa had cut a P50 million plan for international events.

The PSC is set to deliberate which sports are to be included in the priority list. The list will then be presented to no less than President Aquino for his final approval.

The Chief Executive had earlier directed the PSC to focus its resources on sports which has the biggest chances of winning in the international stage.

Shakey's volleyball: Angelicum stuns CSA

ANGELICUM College rode on a resurfacing second-set victory to topple Colegio San Agustin (CSA) in three and join three others in the early lead in the Shakey's Girls Volleyball League (SGV) leg at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City last Sunday.

Angelicum fought back from a set down to sweep the next two and pull off a 20-25, 26-27, 25-18 win over CSA in Pool B in the opening set of one of the eight regional tournaments culminating in the Tournament of Champions next month in Davao City.

Regie Christian Arbasol scouted University of Santo Tomas to a duel of twinhill teams, 25-17, 25-7, while National University downed Rizal High School, 25-15, 25-12, in Pool A action in the event sponsored by Shakey's and organized by Mikee Sports.

Kings' Montenard Arbasol routed St. Jerom Academy-Malabon, 25-6, 25-7, also in Pool B of the eight-staging of the tournament backed by Tide's, Mikasa and Asics.

The other teams in the two divisions, seven teams each, get to see action Saturday with the top two teams in both groups after the single round elims slashing in the crossover semis. The winners will dispute the MCB leg crown.

READY TO RUMBLE Freego Jason Ilustre (center, Ribaya) Tic Clout vows, Enid Ibanez (left) chats team manager Joel Tiu (right), coach Leo Austria (2nd from right) and other members of the team after it swept rivals Cebuana Lhuillier to enter the D-League Aspirants' Cup finals. Freego will battle NLEX in the series that starts today. Sen. Gerry Abaya

Hernandez, pal top Yulo golf

ANTONIO Hernandez and Bobby Rigo combined for 140 to capture the overall championship in the 36th Jose Yulo Memorial golf tournament at the north and south courses of the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna last weekend.

Hernandez and Rigo posted an 82 in the first round then closed out with an 84 as they nipped the Jose Ysmerio-Edwin Hernandez pair (81-84-165) by two to become the annual 90-hole, member-guest event held in honor of the former Speaker and founder of Gerry's Grill.

Antonio Ong and Nelson Lim assembled a 102 from rounds of 76 and 86 to finish third in the tournament backed by lots-in-one sponsors Mitsubishi Motors, Bayerson Motors, Club Car Phils., The Tire Company, Taylor Made and Mizuno.

Hernandez and Rigo brought home a Samsung LED TV plus trophies each while Ysmerio and Hernandez received Smart LED TVs plus BNG plaques. Ong and Lim were a Blackberry Curve 8520 each.

Gabriel Mundoz and Sebastian Lorenzo took the low team gross crown with a 148 from a pair of 74s while Jose Rosal won the individual low gross plum with a 76.

The tourney was a rivalry pairings of the event.

BOSTON Celtics' Paul Pierce (right) loses control of the ball under pressure from Cleveland Cavaliers' Antawn Jamison Tuesday

Lakers give Bryant rest in easy win

KOBE Bryant's four-start allowed him to clock off early as the Los Angeles Lakers made easy work of the Charlotte Bobcats in a 105-73 home blowout win Tuesday.

Bryant, the NBA's leading scorer, fired 16 points in the first quarter and scored a game-high 24 all in the first half when the Lakers built a big lead against the NBA's worst team.

Job done, Bryant sat out the fourth quarter, a welcome sight for the Lakers coaching staff with the 16-year veteran entering the night second in the league in minutes per game.

Los Angeles (33-9) set the early tone with a 19-8 run in the first half up by 24.

The slumping Bobcats (3-39) lost their ninth game on the season, the most since they dropped a franchise-worst 15 in 2008.

Andrew Bynum chipped in 20 points and 11 rebounds to help the Lakers get a final home win before they head out on a six-game road trip beginning Friday.

In Toronto, Ailanah Joe Johnson needed just three quarters to match his season high with 36 points as the Hawks rounded their early struggles into over the Toronto Raptors with a commanding 100-77 victory.

Johnson matched his average of 36 points in each of his past four games against Toronto, while Tracy McGrady added 21 for the Hawks.

In Indianapolis, Paul George scored a career-high 24 points as host Indiana past New Jersey 106-99.

In Cleveland, Brad Wanta scored 20 points as Boston avenged a 36-opposing loss to Cleveland two days earlier by barely holding off the struggling Cavaliers, 90-80.

In New York, Carmelo Anthony scored 25 points in his return to the lineup as New York ended a three-game losing skid by comfortably beating Detroit, 113-86. AP

Pinoy SEAG gold winners earn PSA citation

FILIPINO gold medalists in the 26th Southeast Asian Games will get a special citation from the Philippine Sportswriters Association when it holds its Annual Awards Night on March 3 at the Manila Hotel.

Double gold medalists Irish Bahiale of Silliman and Francis-co Adajar-co Partidge lead the 58 Filipino athletes who topped their respective events during the biennial meet held in Jakarta, Palembang and West Java.

Other notable gold medal winners include Mariatella Jones, who shattered the meet record in the women's long jump, and bowler Frederick Ong, the most bemedalled among the Filipino delegation with five, including the gold in men's singles.

The 512-strong 191 athletes also grabbed 51 silver medals and 75 bronze medals to finish in sixth place in the two-week event held last November.

All 26 gold medalists share centerstage on that night when the sportswriting specialty for the season on pool Eng Dennis Uy-coilo and boxing champion Nonito Donaire Jr. the 2011 Athlete of the Year title.

Torres-san PSA co-Athlete of the Year in 2009 when she won the gold in the same event during the Asian Championships.

Vice President Jejomar Binay will be gracing the event per-sonnel by Senate, Mike, Sil Prime Holdings, PCSO, the Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., Barbosa Gaisano, Philippine Basketball Association, and Coca-Cola, where the top achievers of the past year will be honored.

Still being deliberated are other recipients of major awards to Olympic sports, according to PSA president Elmo Bascad of Tempo.

REUS Rafeala

Blue Thunder notch Scuaa's 1st grand slam

THE RIZAL Technological University Blue Thunder thrashed Bartist, 84-79, to clinch their third straight title in the 24th Stats Colleges and Universities Athletic Association basketball title recently.

Handled by rookie-ed coach Sanggiay Jose and supported by RTU president Dr. Jesus Torres, the Blue Thunder completed Scuaa's first grand slam after also winning the title in 2010 and 2011.

After Mark Mahaluman powered the blue-dalaysang-hued Blue Thunder with 27 points and 11 rebounds while veteran Tristan Pagoria swatted 13 points, Julius Siagoro and Angel Quinco provided elite court generalship.

"It's really a big achievement for the players and the team," said Jose, who became the league's youngest coach with a 29-0 record.

Jose was also appointed as head coach of the Scuaa-NCR team which will participate in the National Scuaa Games scheduled in Iloilo City next month.

"Most of the players who have played for us were on to join other tournament collegiate teams in the UAAP and NCAA," said Jose, pointing to the likes of Robbie Celis and Dennis Villamor (now with MJ), Jeremie Tabinguar and Alex Mendellores (UE), Philip Desiderio (JRU), Mark Bruna (Adamson) and Jerry Encinas-Cliff (Ilit in D-Lasalle).

Jose, who is being assisted by Albert Gloya and Joel Lagunay, also attributed the team's success to the support of Sen. Bayani Gonzales and Mayor Redwan Ibadas of Mandaluyong. Jose, Heidi Distiller and Danny Francisco of Gilmara Distiller, RTU sports director Nole Lirosa, Tesda Secretary Joel Villanueva, Clarence Ayuma of Skytex, Lourdes Asuncion, Kaby Ibiza and Ernesto Ventura.

Comatose: Nothing went wrong?

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

IT'S NOT his duty, but here comes Manny Pacquiao warming boxers and aspirant pugs against the game, deadly dangers of the lethal sport.

Pacquiao said boxing must be treated with utmost seriousness and care.

"I think less-low any way boxing needs long warnings (It's no joke, fighting inside the ring, you could get killed)," Pacquiao told CNN News.

So, Pacquiao was not trying to bring doom to boxers and neophytes.

He definitely had been hit by dreadful killer punches, like the one in the bloody bout against Miguel Cotto and Antonio Margarito—but hardly talked about it.

"Kailangan Ando-ko ay ensuring manggawa Dina muna ko ready for ring protect," Pacquiao advised.

***

It's among his duties, as Dr. Sonny Cruz must also be reminded to always make sure sufficient paraphernalia, like oxygen tank, are immediately available at ringside on fight night.

Cruz is the chief of the Games and Amusements Board (GAB) boxing division.

He answered the sensitive and powerful post upon the retirement of the able Nell Flores some half dozen years ago.

In short, it's Cruz, previously the medical officer of the GAB boxing division, and not Pacquiao who should be advising boxers following the latest ring tragedy that killed a young, promising pro in Cabuyao on Saturday.

He was at ringside.

Of course, there was an ambulance on standby, which eventually took the fallen fighter to the hospital.

But if there was nothing wrong, why did veteran referee Ernest Mabuyo refuse to work the succeeding bout unless an oxygen tank was put on standby?

***

Ernest said Maquiso would not be operated on.

"His brain will just pop out, said a noted neurologist, once doctors open his skull to drain the blood because of pressure from the clot," Ernest wrote.

Nothing went wrong?

"What's certain is that paramedics in a standby ambulance weren't prepared to take care of Maquiso when the tragedy happened," Ernest said.

He added: "There was no provision for oxygen, tank hose or dam board."

The famous columnist also noted that a stretcher was rolled out of the ambulance and the premiere Maquiso was dragged clumsily from the ring onto the gurney.

***

Ernest called the skirmishing all "this spelling among a cadaver."

Nothing went wrong, nobody to blame?

Yes, there was nothing wrong, as far as Dr. Cruz was concerned.

Truth is that the Jes-setting GAB boxing division chief, a regular in all Pacquiao fights in Los Angeles, would've not entered the mentally crisis if he had been at ringside before the tragedy.

Xavier rips Saint Jude CS; Uno High subdues St. Stephen's

REIGNING back-to-back champion Xavier School doubled St. Jude Catholic School, 89-67, to clinch a twice-as-best edge in the quarterfinals of the Juniors division in the 42nd Shoe Mo-ida Thong Dee Basketball Association Tournament Tuesday at the Trinity High School gym.

Yusuk Olympia Games veteran Jerson Sing put on another shooting clinic as the Golden Stallions notched their fourth win in five games, assuring themselves of the No. 2 spot at the end of the eliminations even if they drop their last game against host Grace Christian College tomorrow.

Despite trailing out with until six minutes left, Sing, who is going on play for De La Salle in the coming UAAP season, finished with 30 points, 10 rebounds, four assists and three steals in 27 minutes of action to boost his bid of winning a record third straight MVP plum.

Hope Christian High School has already secured the no-night seeds both on the strength of its 5-0 record in the season-ended tournament presented by Regent Industrials Sales Inc. and World Balance.

Chiang Kai Shek College moved one step closer defending champion Batang Pier-Jumbo Plastic into the Finals with a 101-62, to complete a five-game sweep of the eliminations in the Aspirants division of the tournament supported by Univen, Burlington, Summit Drinking Water, 3-in-One, Bond Paper, Asperkleen Bond Paper, Ace White Sipa and Mistosa.

Powered by JC Gallego and Maverick Cleto, the Sleeping Dragons led from start to finish to blitz-wise secure the automatic semis berth. Gallego topscored for CKSC with 26 points while Cleto and Evan Yu had 22 and 16 markers.

An underpinning were the Sleeping Dragons who walloped the field by an average winning margin of 65 points.

In the other juniors match, Uno High School improved its record to 2-3 by whipping St. Stephen's High School, 87-61.

TENE

SPORTSWATCH

6 Aussie karters test mettle of Filipino rivals Feb. 4-5

SIX MEMBERS of the SG Racing Team Australia test their mettle against Filipino rivals in the first SG International Kart Race from Feb. 4-5 at the Carmona Racetrack in Cavite.

The entries one of three racing spectacles slated for the weekend together with the kickoff of the 2012 Demo 402 RTD Car Series and the championship event of the 2011 Petron Karting Super Series sponsored by Petron Blaze Gas Miguel Corp. Motorstar and Autocraft.

Leading the charges for SG Racing Team Australia are Jalon Walsh and Adrian O'Callaghan of the Eastern Goldfields Kart Club. Joining them are Shaw South Wales drivers Martin Shaw, Peter Shaw, Paul Wheeler and Michael Bartley.

O'Callaghan and Bartley will be vying for the SG Expert and Senior titles while Walsh will be joining the SG Veterans class with the Shaws and Shaw.

B-Meg backs P2M derby

B-MEG Derby Ace will sponsor the Philippine Mega Ecotopia's 22nd Anniversary 1-Cock Derby that dangles a guaranteed prize of P2 million on Feb. 4 and Feb. 5 at Barrio Avenue, Barangay Tumbo, Parañaque.

The Team Robigan accumulator is by hosted by Dexter Lapid, who's had a pot money amounting to P11,000. The winning horse and gaffer will win P70,000 and P30,000, respectively. The minimum bet is P5,000.

For De-elimination round on Feb. 5, the guaranteed prize is pegged at P100,000 while the winning handler and gaffer will earn P60,000 and P30,000, respectively.

The eligible bird is three 1.8-2.4kg and subscription is P1,000 a pre-day. Call Joe Dexter by (0 [illegible]).

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ESQ Big Event 4-cocker

A GRAND showdown of Metro Manila's big time cockers kicks off today at Pasay Square Garden via the "ESQ Big Event 4-Cock Derby" with more than 80 fights on tap.

The battle starts at 4 p.m.

Involved in the derby Pangalusa Brothers of Rizal are cocking idol Patrick Antonio, Bong Ang, Bethney Elano, Jun Sevilla, Eddie Gonzales, James Uy, Mike Quan, Art Lopez, Kong Rivera, Mackenzie an Brothers, Albert Yan, Jing Gabisa, Manny Ko, Carlos Tampalan, Three Musketeers, Archers group, Charlie Sayson, Vito Barcelona, Marvin Uy, Marvin Nito, Mayors Royal Visayas and reigning two-weekly, Pido Jarencio and lawyer Jun Mendoza.

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Empire East

Aplus METRO
Editor Kimberly S. Mendoza

DID YOU KNOW

THE NATIONAL Museum of the Philippines, located in Rizal Park, Manila, houses a collection of over 1,000 paintings, sculptures, bones, shells/flora and fauna/crafts in its 45 galleries. The collection, which spans the 19th to the 21st century, includes artworks like Juan Luna's "Spoliarium" and Fabian de la Rosa's "Mother and Child." **Sahara Gonzales, Inquirer Research**

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Oil leak cleanup worries expert

By Nathaniel R. Mallonan

AN EXPERT has raised concerns about the efforts of the system to be used by the Lopez-led First Philippine Industrial Corp. (FPIC) for the recovery and treatment of petroleum products that leaked from its pipeline nearly two years ago.

Dr. Carlo Arcilla, director of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, said the Multi-Phase Extraction (MPE) System to be used by FPIC could have effects on the ground, on and water quality of the immediate vicinity of Silver Tower condominium.

The oil leak was first detected in the basement of the 22-story condominium in Barangay Barangkal, Makati City, in July 2010, leading to the building's closure.

In a town hall meeting with barangay residents and condominium unit owners yesterday, Arcilla explained that around one million liters of petroleum products remain trapped underground. Some remain in pipelines from while the rest have either escaped into the soil or mixed with groundwater.

"What the MPE will do is to siphon off the water and petroleum and separate it," he said. "The water will then be passed through filtration systems before being released back to the drainage system while the petroleum can still be heated and used as boiler fuel. Meanwhile, unusable petroleum will be burned off."

Arcilla pointed out that although the MPE had been approved by the Inter-Agency Committee on Environmental Health—the government task force formed to oversee the cleanup and restoration of petroleum-leak affected areas—there were still questions about the system.

"First, since this will involve a lot of siphoning of water to undergo treatment, the water table could collapse. In effect, the ground level could gradually sink," he said.

CLEOMAR AZA

DR. CARLO Arcilla of the UP National Institute of Geological Sciences shows a bottle containing a mixture of groundwater and oil during a forum on the cause of the cleanup in West Tower Condominium in Makati City. NATHANIEL MALLONAN

SPORTS SERIES INNOVA
CAR ACCESSORIES

Navotas hostage-taker gives up without a fight

By Kristine Felicia Mangunay

IT HAD all the elements of a movie in the making.

When Ramonchito Ferris III held at knife point an administrative officer of Navotas Polytechnic College Wednesday morning, he first demanded that he be given a glimpse of his favorite TV personalities, including MMDA reporter Bernard Custer and GMA-7 reporter Ian Cruz.

Then, a former student of the school, told Amy Perez (see the related article on the administration office of the college) around 9 a.m., had written a note on the window of a room in the building which said: "Don't you dare use to kill my hostage please! Media! 7 GMA 7 and MMDA QPCTV."

The requests refused, citing corporate policies prohibiting the media from interfering in police operations after the Rhoda hostage crisis in 2010.

Hours then, text negotiators that using a TV camera would be enough for him to release those abducted.

Capt. Redmond del Rosario, public information officer of the Northern Police District, told reporters they would give in to the demand, but in the end, Del Rosario went back empty-handed.

Jofred Valdezco, who said he was Ferris's ROTC batch mate, told police that before transferring to another school, in 2009, Ferris had slit his neck with a kitchen knife.

MARIVIC SOI

A TENSE situation in Navotas is resolved peacefully after the city's crisis negotiator was able to persuade Bernardito Tarun (center) to release his hostage, an administrative officer of a local school. ROY DOMINGO

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Body on burning bed arouses fire probers' suspicions

A FIREMAN watches as other firefighters check a building in Quiapo, Manila, which caught fire on Wednesday morning.

By Jaymee T. Gamil

INVESTIGATORS have started looking into the fire which broke out at a lodging house in Quiapo, Manila, yesterday morning, leaving five people dead and four others injured.

This was after witnesses told the police that they found one of the fatalities lying on a burning bed.

The witnesses also said that the fire started in the room of the victim—who has yet to be identified—at the Red Apple Lodging Inn located on the second floor of a five-story building at 641 Quezon Blvd. in Quiapo.

The victim, described as a man between the ages of 30 and 40 and with brown complexion, had checked into the establishment at around midnight.

He was wearing a brown jacket, a pair of pants, a student cap and carrying a small backpack.

SPO4 Dennis Javier of the Manila Police District (MPD) homicide section said Chief Inspector Roberto Fajardo ordered the victim's body sent badly burned, they could not establish if there was foul play involved. He added that there was also the possibility that his death may have been a suicide.

"We could not determine the cause of the fire but it started from the bed. If Che Fire was accidental, the victim would have awakened and he could have easily gotten up and walked out of the room," Javier said.

Witnesses said they did not see anyone going or coming out of the victim's room before the fire broke out at 3:22 a.m. It reached the third alarm before it was put out nearly two hours later.

Tandoy, Stefen Dimas, the lodging house's stay in custody, said that she and another lodger saw smoke coming from the victim's room.

They then heard two consecutive explosions which they suspected came from faulty electrical wiring.

She said that the other lodger, Leo Pinero, leaned upon the door to the victim's room and saw him lying on the bed which was on fire. SPO2 Amelito Lopez of the MPD homicide section said in his report.

Also killed in the fire was octogenarian Clare Mendoza, 83, who lived on another floor.

She suffocated to death after she tried to go back to her room to get her belongings. Damage to property was estimated at around P500,000.

Bellagio I now a tourist spot

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

BUTBUT Supreme Court Justice Serafin Cuevas is in trouble—both from the public that admires him and from his church, the influential Iglesia ni Cristo (INC).

From an admiring public, for detaining a recorded interview with an Inquirer reporter whom he said he didn't remember to present before Malacañang for him to withdraw from the impeachment trial.

From the INC, which might excommunicate him, for coming out with the story.

* * *

A front-page story in the Inquirer yesterday said Cuevas was forced to deny the report after the INC scolded him, according to an INC insider.

It was a good thing the interview with the 83-year-old Cuevas was tape-recorded.

Cuevas' denial made him look either like a petty liar or a garrulous old man who has memory lapses.

It was a bad reflection on his client, impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona.

The retired Supreme Court justice and former secretary of justice told Inquirer reporter Christine V. Esguerra he was approached by a Palace emissary who asked him to withdraw from the impeachment trial in exchange for the dropping of criminal charges that would be filed against Hacienda Luisita, the sacked chief of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

Because of the Cuevas caper, a source in the Palace said there is now the other shoe around: It was the INC, of which Cuevas and Gatdula are members, which pressured Malacañang to go easy on Gatdula.

The influential religious sect, whose members vote as a block, supported P-Noy in the presidential election.

It apparently wanted the President to return the favor by making that Gatdula be spared from further prosecution after he was dismissed as NBI chief.

Gatdula, who had no blot on his record when he was with the Philippine National Police (PNP), was linked to the kidnapping of Sonfyn Ohara, an undocumented alien, by NBI agents.

It is now obvious that P-Noy didn't give in to the INC request.

And, in retaliation, Cuevas made up that story about being pressured by the Palace into withdrawing as Corona's chief defense counsel.

* * *

The President is walking on a tight rope in the Gatdula affair.

If he finally gives in to the INC, the findings of the fact-finding panel that Justice Secretary Leila de Lima formed to look into Ohaven kidnapping will be for naught.

If he stands firm and says no, then the INC will retaliate by supporting candidates of the opposition in the mid-election.

If P-Noy shuns political considerations, then he's really serious about his slogan espoused (spreading the straight and narrow path) method of governance.

He needs all the support from the people.

* * *

Property developer Megaworld, builder of Bellagio Tower I, has only Chief Justice Renato Corona to thank profusely for making the condominium a hotel spot.

Every day hundreds of people take pictures of the 38-floor condominium, where Corona lives on the topmost floor, from the playground of Burgos Circle at The Fort, Taguig City.

The condominium has been in the news lately because of Corona.

The value of the real property has gone up considerably.

* * *

By the way Corona's fellow resident is a police general still in the active service.

Another is retired Maj. Gen. Jacinto Ligot, former comptroller of the Armed Forces, who is being investigated with his wife, known as the "crying lady," for unexplained wealth.

There was no demolition, says ex-Rizal town mayor

By Hilda Cabija

FORMER Rodriguez town mayor Pedro Casilpan said yesterday that he would ask the Sandiganbayan to remove its ruling that either day which sentenced him and nine other officials to serve six to nine years in prison over the illegal demolition of temporary shelters built on a pot rate property in 1993.

"I will file a motion for reconsideration this week. Although I don't believe the Sandiganbayan will deny it, I will also bring the case to the Supreme Court," he said in a phone interview.

"It was not a demolition. I merely prevented them from building their houses," Casilpan added.

The anti-graft court's Second Division had found him and two other local officials in Rizal province guilty of violating the antigraft law when they ordered the demolition of the temporary shelters built by 93 residents on a newly bought property in Barangay Burgos in 2000.

On top of the jail sentence, the Sandiganbayan also disqualified Casilpan, then municipal engineer Reinaldo Bello and barangay chief Salvador Gonzales from holding public office.

According to the court's ruling, the three were liable for busting down the residents' makeshift homes "precipitately and without due notice."

The complainants bought the 8,250-sq m property in Barangay Burgos in 2002 through the P2.15 million financial assistance they received from the Maglipad family whose Quezon City property they had agreed to vacate.

Casilpan, however, claimed that part of the property was a river-up creek which was considered a dangerous zone by the local government.

"I did not want to endanger the lives of would-be residents by allowing them to construct their houses in a dangerous area. We never only following the necessary procedures," he said.

Navotas hostage-taker gives up

From page A-19

Saldaniza said that at that time, Santia and his hands were seen being "pressured" by upset BOTC classmates.

Police said that Santia, who had gone to the school to get his transcript of records, snapped when he saw the low grades he got in two subjects.

Navotas Rep. Toby Tanguo, who was witness to the negotiations, told reporters later that Santia had other problems in another educational institution which he refused to identify.

Around 1 p.m., an ambulance was seen leaving the premises, with Perez in it, according to Chief Insp. Bernardo Embido, chief of administration of the Navotas City Police.

Embido said the hostage had been released unharmed, but that she would undergo medical tests. Santia surrendered peacefully, Tanguo added.

Mission later, another ambulance was seen leaving the area with Santia, who was later taken to the Navotas police headquarters where charges will be filed against him.

"Congratulate the crisis committee for a job well done. They planned everything every step of the way," Tanguo said.

METROBRIEFS

Box with 12 grenades found in front of condo

THE DISCOVERY on Tuesday of a box of hand grenades in front of a condominium in Pasig City is not part of a terror plot, according to police officials, said. "There is no cause for alarm," Senior Supt. Jessie Cardona, Pasig police chief, said yesterday. He added that the grenades were probably owned by a former military man who wanted to get rid of them but did not know how to dispose of the explosives properly. A dozen 40 mm high-explosive grenades packed into a box were found by a garbage collector at around 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday in a trash bin in front of Villa Sagana Condominium in Barangay Manggahan. The grenades, which according to the police were recovered by military men, looked old. Cardona said that the name of the grenades probably got rid of the explosives because he was afraid that these might explode. The explosives have been turned over by the police to members of the Explosives and Ordnance Division of the Eastern Police District for proper disposal. Mike Gallaga

Boy falls out of school bus

AN 8-YEAR-OLD boy was injured after he fell from a school bus carrying students at the intersection of North Avenue and Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City yesterday. SPO2 Reynaldo Pelilay of the Quezon City Police District's Traffic Enforcement Group said Joshua Ian Ilao, a student of Sagana Pag-asa Elementary School, was brought to East Avenue Medical Center for treatment. His condition was described as stable. The boy was on his way to school at around 8 a.m. yesterday when he fell out of the school bus. Witnesses said the vehicle was on North Avenue and about to turn right on Mindanao Avenue when the door suddenly came open. The boy who was seated at the rear of the vehicle fell out of his seat and onto the road. Pelilay said the driver of the school service would be charged with reckless imprudence resulting in physical injuries. Nancy C. Carvajal

Cleanup worries expert

From page A-11

However, chances of that happening are slim as the coal dust over a thick layer of adobe rock covers the mine table. "Should this happen, THC should pay," he added.

He other concerns were the quality of air and water that would be released back in the environment after treatment.

To monitor this, Ancilla said that UP NIGS has purchased a gas chromatography-mass spectrometry machine to detect the presence of toxic chemicals, such as carcinogens, in the treated discharge.

"The testing will be done every two months since the MOU covers five years of operating," he said.

The cleanup operation could start within the month and last for more than three years.

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US eyes global expansion of special military operations

WASHINGTON—As traditional military operations are cut back, the Pentagon is moving to expand the world-wide reach of the US Special Operations Command to strike back wherever threats arise.

US officials say the Pentagon and the White House have embraced a proposal by special operations chief Adm. Bill McRaven to push troops that are withdrawing from war zones to reinforce special operations units in areas somewhat neglected during the decade-long focus on al-Qaida.

US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta showed few doubts in backing the new Pentagon budget to be outlined on Thursday, but officials explained the nascent plan in greater detail to The Associated Press (AP).

McRaven started working late last fall to sell defense leaders on a plan to beef up his existing "Theater Special Operations Commands," as they are known, to reposition staff and equipment for the post-Iraq and Afghan war era.

The stepped-up global network would put top special operations personnel closer to the presidents they face, better able to launch unilateral raids like the one that killed Osama bin Laden—and the one Tuesday that rescued an American hostage and her Danish colleague, a headline that served to drive home President Barack Obama's national security achievements in his first term, just as his front of the Union speech on Tuesday unofficially launched his campaign for a second term.

The expanded presence means troops would be better able to partner with foreign armies for joint operations, according to a senior defense official who spoke to the AP and to other current and former US officials briefed on the program.

All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the details of the proposal and ongoing of implementation are still being worked out.

The idea melds with the White House goal to transform the US military into a smaller, more agile force, able to respond to a wide variety of threats beyond traditional military enemies, often in partnership with local allies. Even as US officials sacrificed over so much of the military, Panetta has said funding for special operations and intelligence gathering will increase—both carrying on the Obama White House's preferred way to confront many global threats, after a decade of costly land invasions to topple Afghanistan.

The Pentagon's—and the White House's—embrace of the plan shows how the politically savvy McRaven has seized the chance of looming defense cuts and his personal star power from leading last year's Bin Laden raid into an opportunity to step up the Special Operations Command's reach and possibly its authority.

The special operations command's main responsibility now is to provide resources and personnel to the geographic combatant commanders. AP

A ZODIAC carrying a diver returns to port from the cruise liner Costa Concordia off the west coast of Italy at Giglio Island after Italian authorities ended the search for bodies from the capsized ship. AFP/VINCENZO PINTO

Divers stop search on cruise ship wreck

ROME—Italian divers on Thursday gave up their search on the wreck of the Costa Concordia, in which 32 people are feared to have died, as workers prepared to start pumping out fuel to avoid an oil spill.

"We have definitively stopped the underwater search inside the ship," said Luca Cari, fire brigade spokesperson on the island of Giglio, explaining that conditions inside the giant hull submerged liver were becoming too risky.

"The conditions are no longer acceptable," he told Agence France-Presse.

The civil protection agency, which has been overseeing the rescue efforts following the Jan. 13 disaster, said in a statement it had contacted the families of the missing people and foreign embassies involved to explain its decision.

It added that rescuers would continue to inspect the above-water part of the liner and ten specialist equipment to check for corpses on the sea bed in an 18-square-kilometer area around the wreck.

The 114,500-ton Costa Concordia with more than 4,200 people aboard was aground on rocks off Giglio and hurled on to its side as passengers were strolling down to dinner shortly after the start of a Mediterranean cruise.

Seventeen bodies have been recovered from the sea and the wreck and 15 people remain missing.

The search has had to be suspended several times due to choppy seas and small movements of the wreck, which sparked fears that the massive ship could slip off the rocky shelf it is resting on and sink entirely.

Divers have described tricky conditions inside the ship, with corridors cluttered with furniture and turned upside-down.

AFP

Deadly European cold snap spreads

KIEV—A cold snap that killed 30 people in Ukraine over the past five days spread on Thursday to southern of eastern and central Europe with record lows in Belgrade and heating up to the continental and parts of Italy.

Emergency services in Ukraine said most of the dead were homeless people who froze to death on the streets. Four were found in their homes, and more than 600 people sought medical help for frostbite and hypothermia.

Authorities spread 1,000 shelters to provide food and hues and were planning to set up 130 more as temperatures plunged to minus 20 degrees Celsius in some regions.

Medics in Poland reported five new deaths on Tuesday bring the overall toll for January to 27 as overnight temperatures dipped to minus 30 degrees Celsius.

In Vilnius, the capital of neighboring Lithuania, new homeless people were found dead on Thursday, bringing the death toll there to eight since Saturday.

In the Czech Republic, a woman was found frozen to death in a garden shed in the capital Prague, police said.

In the Balkans, a 72-year-old man and a 58-year-old woman were found dead of cold in central and southern Serbia respectively, where the temperatures have fallen to minus 15 degrees Celsius, private B92 television reported.

Since Sunday, three people have died in Serbia and one in neighboring Macedonia.

Meanwhile, two died in Romania, raising the death toll to eight since Thursday, the health ministry said.

AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Aussie bus boss thanks staff via $15-M bonus

MELBOURNE—An Australian bus operator has thanked his employees by handing out Aus$15 million (US$15.8 million) in thank you bonuses, with workers saying on Wednesday they were overwhelmed by the generosity. Ken Gronda, 79, said his family-run company offer 86 years and decided to put a chunk of the profits into the pockets of his employees for their hard work and loyalty. Many of the 1,800 workers thought their lumpy had made an error when they discovered thousands of dollars in their accounts, the Herald Sun reported. They received an average $8,500, although some got as high as $100,000. "A business is only as good as its people, and our people are fantastic," Gronda said. AFP

WikiLeaks' Assange to appeal extradition

LONDON—WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange will appeal to Britain's Supreme Court on Wednesday not to extradite him to Sweden over accusations of sex crimes, Australian-born Assange, 40, became a worldwide celebrity and infuriated the US government in 2010 when WikiLeaks released secret video footage and thousands of US diplomatic cables about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since then, the mosaic have dried up and WikiLeaks has faded from the news headlines, hampered by major credit card companies that are refusing to process online donations to it, and bogged down by Assange's protracted legal troubles. Assange was detained in Britain in December 2010. Reuters

Aisha Gadhafi offers info to 'protect' bro'd

THE HAGUE—Aisha Gadhafi wrote to a private "courier" information to protect the interests of her brother Seif al-Islam, who is wanted for crimes against humanity, the International Criminal Court (ICC) said on Tuesday. Gadhafi's lawyer Mark Kaufman delivered the request to the ICC, which immediately made it public. "Aisha Gadhafi wishes to present concrete information which she believes will assist the Pre-Trial Chamber in determining an appropriate course of action," the request said. Moreover Gadhafi's daughter underscored in the appeal that she wanted to "protect the interests of her brother." The ICC denied on Monday that it had agreed that Seif can be tried in Libya, saying it had not come to a decision. Seif, 39, is in the custody of the military council of Zintan. AFP

Drug to treat cystic fibrosis approved

WASHINGTON—The first drug that treats the root cause of cystic fibrosis won US approval on Tuesday, offering a life-changing treatment for American patients with the deadly illness and broader hope for thousands more patients with the inherited disease. Kaftrio fibrosis is a disease that causes sticky mucus buildup in the lungs and other organs, leading to infections, digestive problems and death in young adulthood. The typical life expectancy is about 37 years, according to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. The food and Drug approved Kaftrio Pharmaceuticals Inc.'s Kalydeco for patients with a rare form of the disease. AP

Romney to Obama: 'Get out of the way'

TAMPA—Republican Mitt Romney lapsided into Romney, the big winner of the Florida primary, on Tuesday turned his guns on President Barack Obama, telling the Democrat to "get out of the way." Romney crushed his nearest rival for the Republican presidential nomination, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, by a double-digit margin in the Sunshine State, according to US media projections.

The victory puts Romney, an investment mogul and former Massachusetts governor, in a commanding position to win the right to take on Obama in the Nov. 6 presidential election.

"Mr. President, you were elected to lead. You chose to follow. And now it's time for you to get out of the way," Romney said, earning cheers from the crowd of supporters and family members gathered in Tampa.

Romney congratulated his three rivals—Gingrich, former Sen. Rick Santorum and Texas Congressman Ron Paul—for what he called a "hard-fought contest." "Our opponents in the other party ... like to conduct themselves with the thought that a competitive campaign will leave us divided and weak," he said.

"But I've got news for them: a competitive primary does not divide us. It prepares us, and we will win," Romney said. But conservative critics say Republicans have party holds its nominating convention in Tampa, "ours will be a united party with a winning ticket for America." The

MITT ROMNEY AFP

former Massachusetts governor then blamed Obama for a series of ills, including the country's high unemployment rate and soaring home foreclosure rate.

Leadership "is about taking responsibility, not making excuses," he said, adding that this year's presidential race is "about saving the soul of America." As president, Romney said he would cut government spending, balance the budget without raising taxes, and "insist on a military as powerful as one would ever think of challenging it."

Romney's margin of victory in Florida—46 percent to 32 percent with almost all the roughly one million votes counted—dealt a bitter blow to Gingrich, who faces a Herculean task to catch the race ahead.

Gingrich, 68, shocked the party establishment when he thumped Romney 44 to South Carolina earlier this month. But his support sank fast in the larger and more diverse state of Florida, and Romney now has all the momentum. AFP

UNFINISHED PROTEST
Hundreds of Egyptians shout anti-Supreme Council for the Armed Forces (SCAF) slogans at Tahrir Square in Cairo, demanding that SCAF step down from power. AP

Seoul sees window for change in North

SEOUL—The death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il raised uncertainty but also presented a window for change in the communist state, South Korea's top official for cross-border dealings said on Wednesday.

"Chairman Kim Jong-il's death heightened uncertainties," Unification Minister Yu Woo-ik said in a speech in a forum.

"South Korea also faces opportunities for changes. I urge the North to drop its old attitude and take the road for reconciliation, exchange and cooperation."

Yu said the South's past provocations had corrected it from the rest of the world, but he called for cross-border dialogue on still pending issues.

While its economy had missed out on industrialization and globalization, "if the North decides on improving people's livelihood, the South is ready to lend a helping hand," Yu said.

The South has stressed that its policy remains unchanged after Kim Jong-un succeeded his father Kim Jong-il, who died on December 17.

Pyongyang has vowed never to deal with the South's conservative government, according it of failing to respect a reconciliation period for his leader.

Military tensions have been high since the South accused the North of responsibility for rare border incidents in 2010 that killed 50 South Koreans.

Some analysts believe the unlisted young leader may stage a border provocation to bolster his credentials with the North's powerful military.

On Tuesday the top US diplomat for East Asia said the North must improve relations with the South if it wants better ties with the wider world. AFP

New audio tape on JFK assassination found

WASHINGTON—Long-lost audio recordings of the aftermath of president John F. Kennedy's (JFK) assassination have been made public, capturing bureaucrats and adviser's frustration about dead ends.

Almost 50 years after the Nov. 22, 1963 assassination, a 2-hour-and-22-minute reel was found among the personal effects of JFK's senior military aide, Maj. Gen. Chester Clifton, who died in 1991.

The reel contains more than 30 minutes of previously unheard footage of conversations on board Air Force One as Kennedy's body was being transported back to Washington from Dallas.

It includes new radio names and locations, including a private conversation by the head of the Secret Service, Jerry Behn, about where to take the body and plans for where the First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, would live next.

There is also an urgent effort by an aide in Air Force chief of staff Curtis LeMay, a well-known hawk and Kennedy critic, to reach Clifton, and attempts to locate various congressmen from Texas.

The material was acquired by the Rusk Collection, a rare documentary holder based in Philadelphia, who donated a digitized copy to the National Archives, made public at gpo.gov/jfkrec.

Experts say the tapes will stir debate among conspiracy theorists, especially about LeMay, a right-wing Republican whose name was conspicuously missing from an edited version of the original tape.

"People have always wanted to know where was Curtis LeMay on the day Kennedy was shot and there have been internet campaigns about it. That tape provides exactly where he was," Kennedy historian Douglas Brinkley told CNN. AFP

JOHN F. KENNEDY AP/FILE

The WORLD

Edited by Lorraine B. Bunoan

Russia, China buck 'forced' Syria change

BEIJING—China and Russia have reiterated their opposition to the use of force to resolve the crisis in Syria, where escalating violence has killed thousands of civilians who oppose President Bashar al-Assad.

Arab and Western states urged the United Nations (UN) Security Council on Sunday to act swiftly on a resolution calling for Assad to step aside.

The United States strongly backed the call by the Arab League and gave the "rapid and decisive action," which some in Assad's government fears reasserted control of Damascus and other cities at the gates of the capital.

"China is firmly opposed to the use of force to solve the Syrian problem and resolutely opposes pushing for forced regime change in Syria, as it violates the United Nations charter," said the Asian nation's guiding principles of international relations.

Chinese Ambassador to the UN Li Baodong as saying to the Security Council.

The brief news report from Xinhua did not give other details.

China, along with Russia, has provided a Western push for a Security Council resolution condemning the Syrian government's 10-month crackdown on pro-democracy protests.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said they would not support any action that would be imposed on Syria and would avoid taking sides in a internal conflict.

"The international community unfortunately did take sides in Libya and we would never allow the Security Council to authorize anything similar to what happened in Libya," Lavrov said in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

"Yes, we condemn strongly the use of force by government forces against civilians, but we can condemn in the same strong way the activities of the armed extremist groups who attack government positions, who attack servicemen, who attack police stations and who terrorize people telling them not to come to jobs, not to come to hospitals, not to come to shops."

China and Russia have prevented the Security Council from approving any military intervention in Syria and vetoed a Western-backed resolution against hard-line government.

Arab League Secretary General Nabil Elaraby called on the council to take "rapid and decisive action" by approving the resolution. —Reuters

IN THIS ISSUE
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Editor Raul G. Marcelo ■ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

■ Bank lending seen growing another 20% in '12 /B6

Stronger anti-money laundering law pushed

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Feb. 1, 2012
42.945

STOCK MARKET
Feb. 1, 2012
33.2
PSE composite index

Stocks surge in heavy trading

MOST local stocks surged yesterday, lifting the main index back to the 4,750 level, as cautious investors snapped up bargain-priced blue chips and conglomerates due to a favorable Philippine economic assessment by international analysts.

The main index, Philippine Stock Exchange Index, gained 50.2 points or 1.07 percent to finish at 4,715.84, thus nearing its intermediate level.

"It is still bullishly fluid in driving the market. Notice that the conglomerates are leading. It's quite on the whole economy," said fund manager Gus Dans, president of First Metro Asset Management Inc.

Dans said the liquidity and investment-driven rallies on the current infrastructure projects so that the financial markets could not be disappointed.

All counters traded favorably but the biggest gainers were the financial and holding firms counters, which respectively surged 1.04 percent and 1 percent. JP Morgan Securities said on Tuesday it had maintained an "overweight" recommendation on the Philippines and that it favored these two counters.

In advance by a good margin, power producer GEC alongside buying of Meralco and Ayala Corp. remained mixed in the PSEi's rise. GEC

Malacañang certifies as urgent bill amending AMLA

By Michelle V. Baron

MALACAÑANG has certified as urgent a bill seeking to put more teeth to the country's existing Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) as legislators called for tougher measures against the crime.

Amando Tetangco Jr., governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, said the Palace has responded to the central bank's call for further amendments to AMLA by asking Congress to prioritize the bill.

The BSP chief said that implementation of the proposed amendments would help the Philippines catch more money launderers and make the country fully compliant with international standards against the crime.

Money laundering is the act of making funds acquired from illegal activities appear legitimate, such as by depositing the proceeds in banks or investing in portfolio instruments.

The law requires banks to report to the Anti-Money Laundering Council suspicious transactions made by their clients. It also mandates banks to report on cash transactions that exceed P500,000 on weekdays and check the status of those activities.

One of the proposed amendments to strengthen the law would require more entities, such as casinos, and professionals like accountants, lawyers, and real estate dealers and brokers of precious metals and stones to report suspicious transactions to the AMLC.

Another proposed amendment is the establishment of a reward system that will aid in the arrest of money launderers.

"My look forward to the enactment of these amendments," Tetangco said in a speech delivered the other day during a forum on anti-money laundering organized by Egmont Group, an international body that promotes the exchange of information and expertise for financial investigations.

Tetangco said that strengthening the law against money laundering was needed to make authorities catch up with the increasing strategies in laundering money.

STORIES, B2

Weak exports seen cutting '12 growth

By Reena V. M. Domingo

PHILIPPINES exports are expected to remain weak in the first semester and deny the full-year performance of total domestic output or gross domestic product (GDP), according to IHS Global Insight.

The financial services group said in a research note that fluctuations in international demand for Philippine goods would remain the most important factor in determining GDP growth in 2012.

"In the 11 months [to] November [2011], exports slumped to contract, led by the ailing semiconductor manufacturers, which fell 16 percent," the Singapore-based firm noted.

"In our base, this has translated into exports declining by 4 percent in the first three quarters of the year," it added. "With the signal number from October and November still showing contraction, the figure for the fourth quarter is unlikely to be much to cheer about."

According to the National Statistics Office, the value of outbound goods settled at $5.94 billion in November, falling by 19.4 percent

STORY, B2

Canon to build printer factory in Batangas

TOKYO—Japanese high-tech giant Canon said Tuesday it would build a laser printer factory in the Philippines in anticipation of strong growth in global demand.

Construction of the facility in Batangas would start in April next year with the plant scheduled to begin production a year later, Canon said in a statement.

"The expected increase in future de-

CANON, B2

Security Bank posts ₱6.7-B profit

Return on equity at a high 25% in 2011

By Doris C. Dumlao

SECURITY Bank Corp. posted a net profit of ₱6.7 billion last year, 6.9 percent lower compared to 2010 when extraordinary trading gains pushed up its earnings to a record high level.

The bank, however, maintained a very high return on equity of 25 percent and built durable earnings from core banking activities last year. Although its bottom line last year did not replicate the record high level of ₱7.36 billion in 2010, the bank actually exceeded its internal targets despite the decline in trading gains in 2011.

Total assets expanded 16 percent in P333 billion, boosted by a 29 percent growth in its loan book to ₱92 billion. Lending activities were spurred by strong credit demand in the top corporate and middle market segments, the bank disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

With the asset growth from loan and investments, net interest income likewise grew 34 percent to ₱7.3 billion, translating to a healthy net interest margin of 4.1 percent.

"We clearly surpassed our targets for the year aided by a facilitation that is evident in the renewed investor confidence in the country with unprecedented loan growth not only for our bank but also for the rest of the industry," said Security Bank president Alberto Villarosa.

"Our full-year performance was likewise enhanced by a favorable operating efficiency ratio as a result of our efforts at managing the interest rate and duration profile of our investment portfolio," he added.

Apart from its high returns, the bank also maintained higher operating efficiency ratio as it invests in people. Its cost-to-income ratio stood at 57.4 percent for 2011 based on operating expenses, excluding provisions and impairment losses, amounting to ₱4.4 billion.

In terms of asset quality, non-performing loans stood at less than 1 percent as a ratio of total loans while reserve cover amounted to 108 percent of soured loans.

The bank's shares surged 2.6 percent to close at ₱116.90 a share yesterday as the market welcomed its strong earnings results for 2011. This gave it a market capitalization of ₱97.13 billion.

Security Bank's capital adequacy ratio stood at 20.3 percent or double the minimum requirement of 10 percent, suggesting ample capacity to increase risk assets.

"The BSP's [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas] consent to our acquisition of Premiere Development Bank and the license to open 30 new branches within the Metro Manila residential area will usher in an unprecedented growth phase for the bank," said SBC chief finance officer Josefino Mapa. Mapa said the bank would remain conscious of growing its franchise "without compromising the discipline we have imposed on our costs as well as our asset quality and credit criteria."

Tanduay net income surges 92% to ₱1.1B

TANDUAY Holdings Inc. grew its net profit last year by 92 percent to ₱1.1 billion on the back of higher selling prices alongside a modest increase in volume.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, TEH publicly listed parent firm Tanduay Holdings Inc. said the rum maker posted ₱12.3 billion in revenues last year, or an increase of 8.8 percent year-on-year.

Higher revenues last year were fueled by a 1.4-percent rise in volume and a 7.4-percent increase in average selling prices.

Sales volume growth of 1.4 percent was relatively slower than the previous year's 7.3-percent growth and the average expansion of 6 percent in the last eight years. Apart from the comparative year 2010 being an extraordinary year due to the presidential elections, sales performance in 2011 was affected by the slower growth in the domestic economy, which expanded only 3.7 percent in 2011 compared to the previous year's 7.3 percent.

Tanduay recently raised ₱1.66 billion from a public offering of shares that also widened its public float to meet the requirements for continuous listing on the local stock market. Proceeds will be used to expand production capacity and improve cost efficiency. — Doris C. Dumlao

Stocks surge From page B1

shares rose 2.4 percent to finish at 95.00, rebounding from the previous days' sell-down triggered by the reported delay in the rehabilitation of its Sual-like power plant.

Ayala shares jumped 3 percent to close at ₱702 while Metrobank rose up 4 percent to ₱78.00.

Manny Gaa, chief strategist at Astarte Equities, said Ayala was catching up with peers like SM Investments Corp. given the brighter prospects for telecom and Globe Telecom and increasing focus on infrastructure.

— Doris C. Dumlao

Stronger From page B1

"The challenge for Egmont Group members is to be proactive in identifying and addressing our weak spots in the way we fight money laundering and terrorist financiers. We have to be alert, committed and most of all committed," Arnaiz said.

The Philippines used to be in the blacklist of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an intergovernmental organization that fights financial crimes like money laundering, for allegedly having weak regulations against money laundering.

Weak exports From page B1

year on year and 18.2 percent month-on-month. The NSO said 11 countries posted dropped 5.6 percent to $42.3 billion.

"Unfortunately, the export outlook for the first half still appears cloudy," DBS said. "Uncertainty about the eurozone debt crisis and slowing global growth will continue to weigh on external demand."

DBS said exports would shave off 1.4 percentage points to GDP growth in 2012, which is an improvement compared to the estimated 3 percentage points it took from 2011 growth.

Will keep secret?

BREAKTIME

Gerardo S. Reyes III

THIS is now the big question on the guys in my barangay: Will the lawyer raise a subpoena to PSBank, a thrift bank in rapacious George Ty's Metrobank group, the largest financial conglomerate in the country today?

Just the other day the prosecution panel in the impeachment of Chief Justice Renato Corona officially asked the Senate to order PSBank to send "authenticated" copies to justify in the impeachment. The prosecution specifically asked for the "specimen signature cards" connected to accounts in PSBank under the name Renato Corona, including the monthly bank statements.

I gathered that, based on the request for subpoena, a certain Renato Corona was ... in a waffle done by PSBank about four years ago — a handsome amount of P1 million. Qualified to join the promo were the depositors of the bank. Apparently, the prosecution panel lifted the name "Renato Corona" from the official list of winners in the bank promo. Obviously, the specimen signature cards should indicate whether or not the "Renato Corona" who is a deposition of PSBank is the Chief Justice.

For some time now, word goes around in business that a dollar bank account in PSBank was opened about four years ago under the name of one of the Chief Justice's children, with an initial deposit of $700,000 — or about P30 million.

That the winner in the PSBank promo was a certain "Renato Corona," should make the episode in the impeachment all the more intriguing.

As I said, PSBank belongs to the group of tycoon George Ty. The Sycip-Gorres group of tycoon Andrew Tan also scattered to the impeachment, in connection with the properties allegedly bought by the Chief Justice from Philippine Realty. Other big names may surface as the trial progresses.

Now, in strict inter-banking bank accounts, the 80-year old bank Secrecy Law (RA 1405) always comes to the rescue which says the law for banks to reveal the name of a depositor or, for that matter, any information related to the deposit. Still, the Supreme Court itself already established certain exceptions to the rule. Among them were, you'll cause a sensational graft and corruption among public officials. Indeed the law was not originally meant to protect crooks.

Way back in the 1950s when the law came into being, the authorities actually intended to encourage people to put their money in the bank, instead of under the bed, and to protect the rich who at that time chose to bring money out of the country illegally, in other words, the law was designed to stimulate domestic savings. It is just that some people use it to cover their tracks, so to speak.

* * *

For one of the country's highly profitable banks, the Spanish-founded Philippine Realty Corp., nicknamed MCB in the stock market, whose market price has gone up by a third in the last three months, it must be a pretty busy week.

The other day, the bank launched its LIONS, or the "long term certificates of negotiable deposits," amounting to ₱5 billion, initially although I gathered that its approval from the Bangko Sentral is an even higher amount. The issuance of these certificates, which are actually bank CDs offering higher yields than other deposits, bearing a specific maturity date, has become a trend in local banking, because it is a sure way for banks to raise money for expansion.

It is a busy week for SBCB also because, yesterday it officially signed the documents for its acquisition of Premiere Development Bank, together with the latter's 18 or so branches. According to SBCB, the selling agents for its LIONS are the bank's underwriting bookrunners Deutsche Bank and Standard Chartered, both foreign banks, plus the local financial institution Multinational Investment Bancorporation and of course the bank itself.

The underwriting period will last for 30 days only, and it ends Feb. 10, with the target issue date only seven days later on Feb. 17. For such high-yielding, borrowing instruments, banks normally target cash refunds with savings accounts because, I think, it's much easier making enough in interest. For SBCB, for instance, the minimum investment is P50,000. The bank said that the proceeds would go to its expansion, particularly in its consumer lending business. Sounds familiar. In 2011 performance, its loan portfolio grew 29 percent, now amounting to P92 billion. Thus, its interest income from loans grew also by more than 30 percent, reaching P7.3 billion. This figure helped to push by net interest to P6.7 billion in 2011, with an ROE of 25 percent, one of the highest in local banking.

Canon to build printer factory in Batangas From page B1

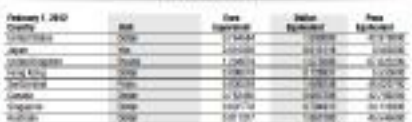
Japan-based electronics giant Canon Inc. announced a groundbreaking ceremony for its new printer factory in Batangas province.

The factory is expected to employ about 5,000 people by 2013, the company said, adding that the premier business was a central pillar of the firm alongside its other office products and cameras.

Canon said it chose the Philippines due to its ready labor supply and the fact that many workers were able to speak English.

Canon has since existing Philippines-based subsidiaries. — AFP

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE



PSALM pursues $3.4-M claim vs bankrupt Lehman

By Amy R. Borlaza

Pinsent Masons chosen to represent agency

SOUTH LUZON Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. has tapped international law firm Pinsent Masons as its legal counsel for the filing of its $3.4-million claim against Lehman Brothers Special Financing Inc.

In a statement, PSALM president and CEO Emmanuel R. Ledesma Jr. said the law firm was tasked to pursue or assert on Jan. 31, following a successful bidding process.

Three lenders were originally six interested parties that submitted their proposals. Two bidders were disqualified due to late submissions while one bidder failed to meet the technical qualifications.

Among those who passed both the technical and financial requirements, Pinsent Masons submitted the lowest financial bid of P18.63 million. This was further lowered to P16.33 million after further negotiations.

Ledesma earlier explained that the $3.4 million it wanted from Lehman Brothers represented the cost of replacement fees and other expenses from the hedging transactions it entered into last 2007.

To recall, Ledesma had said that the transaction that PSALM entered into with Lehman Brothers was not an investment but a hedging transaction, specifically a Principal Only Swap (POS) transaction.

"The transaction would be likened to an insurance purchase wherein PSALM pays an annual expense premium of 2.667 percent on the notional amount of $900 million for 19 years. In exchange, PSALM, or the government, has the right to buy dollars at P44.7501 in 2028 regardless of the foreign exchange rate at that time," Ledesma explained.

Ledesma said that when Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy late years ago, PSALM had only made two premium payments. As such, PSALM immediately invoked the International Swaps and Derivatives Association Inc. (ISDA) agreement upon learning of the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy terminated the transaction in November 2008, and replaced it with a new POS with the same terms and conditions.

"The replacement is to ensure the continuous protection of PSALM's transactions that it initially made with Lehman Brothers," Ledesma emphasized.

"Hence, is my that PSALM lost on the deal is totally inaccurate. In fact, the value of the Lehman swap that was replaced may now be sold in the derivatives market for up to approximately $12.65 million as of November 2010," he explained.

SM launches Green Residences condo project

By Doris C. Dumlao

SM DEVELOPMENT Corp. has unveiled its first condominium project for this year—the single-tower, 50-story "Green Residences" near the Taft Avenue, Manila.

SMDC disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Wednesday that it had begun pre-selling studio units and one-bedroom units, either with or without a balcony for about P1.5 million to P1.5 million. Unit sizes are between 33 and 39 square meters.

The project will make available around 2,000 additional residential condominium units in the property market.

Construction of Green Residences started late last year while target completion is in the first half of 2014, SMDC said.

Apart from its proximity to DLSU, which thrives richer inspired the name of the project, Green Residences is also near other major educational institutions in Manila, such as College of St. Benilde and St. Scholastica's College. It seeks to offer easy access to public transport for unit owners via the Vito Cruz and Quirino stations of elevated railway Light Railway Transit. Major commercial establishments like shopping malls and restaurants are within the vicinity of Green Residences.

SMDC said this newest project "intends to serve the demand for first-time homes within the area coming from thousands of students and their families."

"As in all other SMDC projects, Green Residences offers five-star quality homes in a prime location," the company said.

The planned amenities of Green Residences include a library with Wi-Fi hotspots, a gym, a game room, function rooms and a swimming pool.

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to the Tausi-tawians of Tawi-Tawi
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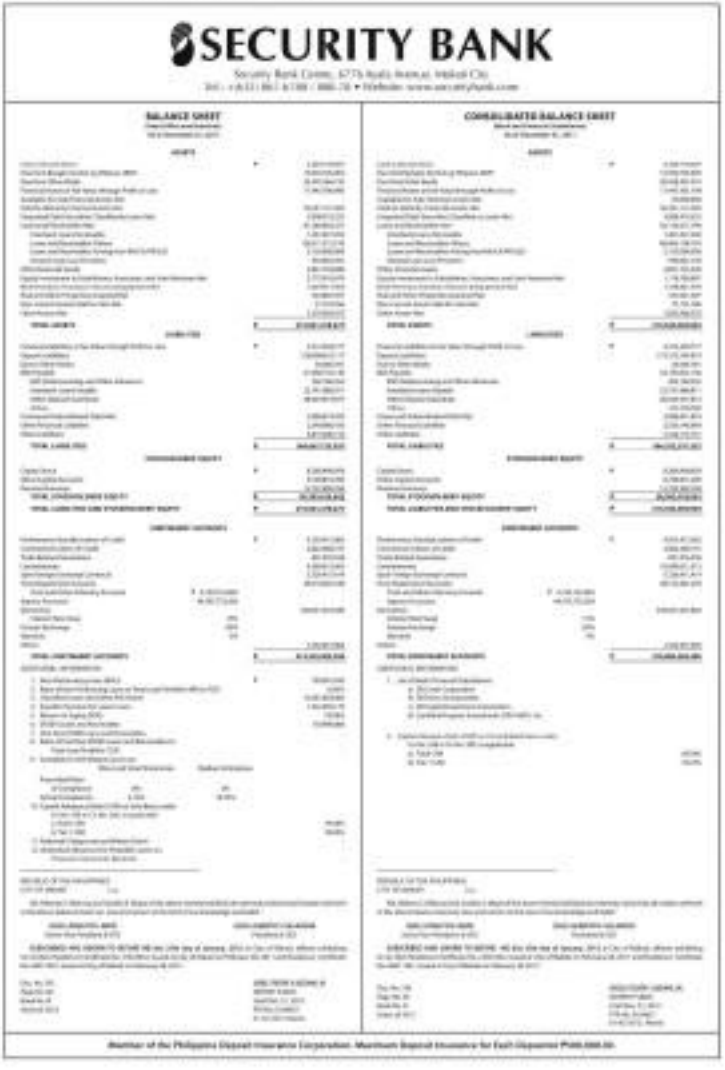
Security Bank issues Long-Term Negotiable Certificates of Deposit

Security Bank Corporation (SBC) continues its effort to customize investment opportunities with its recent launch of Long-Term Negotiable Certificates of Deposit (LTNCDs). The LTNCDs Offer period is until February 10, in denominations of P10,000 and a minimum investment amount of P50,000 with target issue date on February 15.

SBC will issue the seven-year LTNCD with quarterly interest payments. The bank has appointed the Manila branch of Deutsche Bank AG and Standard Chartered Bank as joint lead arrangers and bookrunners. Said banks were also appointed as selling agents, together with Multinational Investment Bancorporation and Security Bank.

LTNCDs are bond-deposit instruments that are meant to mobilize savings and encourage long-term investment for individual investors, with a designated maturity period of either five years and three months or seven years. As a deposit product, LTNCDs are insured with the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) up to a maximum of P500,000 per depositor.

As an investment tool, LTNCDs offer the advantage of higher yield and tax exemption for qualified individual investors if held for more than five years as compared to other investment outlets available in the market. Investors may open a Philippine peso deposit account or nominate an existing account where interest and redemption of LTNCDs will be credited.


SECURITY BANK

Security Bank Centre, 6776 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

BALANCE SHEET

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National Capital Region
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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits.

Name and address of Company/ Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
ADVANCE TOWER 107 EDSA, Plaza, Kalentong Tower, 1610 Mandaluyong, Makati City	Sultan, Alan Iranian	Senior Account Executive
ACCENTURE, INC. UPS Bldg., Kalaunan, Makati City	Hussain Sabir/Hunain Sabir Indian	Senior Manager
TROPICAL GEAR TOURISM, 2,3,5 & 29 ADSNA Power Center Bldg., Nanungalan Ave. corner Ave. Santos, Tandang Sa	Jangmin Cho Korean	Consultant
THE GAZ CORP INC. 27 Galaxy Bldg., 107 Edsa cor. B. Aquino Village, Makati City	Mel Sanchez Filipino	Executive Assistant
LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES (PHILIPPINES), INC. UP Ayala Land Technohub, Quezon City	Wang Jian Chinese	Marketing Assistant
ASTRAZENECA PHILIPPINES, INC. 12/F Rockwell One Technology Tower, Rockwell Global City, Pasig City	Steven Michael Mead American	Chairman of the Board and President
ACCENTURE, INC. J. Antonio Arellano Ave. Brgy. San Antonio, Parañaque City	Phanuphan Sukhumalanand Thailander	Country General Manager
NEW WORLD INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PHILIPPINES, INC. Experience St. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Vijay Sakhuja Indian	Executive Chef
KU GUANG TEA (MACAU S. (PHILIPPINES), 3/F Cube Tiers, Aguirre St. cor. Timog St. and 3rd Triangle Ave., Pinag-Ibaba, Makati City	Huang Hua American	IT Director and
HCL TECHNOLOGIES PHILIPPINES, INC. 14/F Net Cube Center Annex cor. 24th St. & Bonifacio Crescent Park, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City	Manikandan Kandaswamy Indian	Engineer - Technology
SUNSWEET (S.E.ASIA) PHILIPPINES, INC. 24/F Rufino Pacific Tower Bldg. 7 Ave. corner Emerald Ave. and St. Paul Boulevard, Ortigas Ctr.	Philippe Gastric Raphael Georg French	Sales Sales
TECH MAHINDRA (PHILS.) 2/F Worldwide Bldg., 4th Avenue Ave. Bonifacio Dr. Extension, Brgy. Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Ganesan Panchagavi Indian	Sr. Project Manager
TECH MAHINDRA (PHILS.) 2/F Worldwide Bldg., 4th Avenue Ave. Bonifacio Dr. Extension, Brgy. Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Vinamrat Bindra Indian	Software Engineer / Technical Associate
ANIL TRADING COMPANY 25-A Narciso St., Forbes Park	Dheeraj Kumar Indian	Purchasing Manager
SUNSWEET (S.E.ASIA) PHILIPPINES, INC. 24/F Rufino Pacific Tower Bldg. 7 cor. 3 Drive St. McKinley cor. 31st St. Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Jean-Francois du Boullay French	Business Unit President for IT
SAINT GOBAIN TRADING CORP. 6 F Ramcar Bldg. 5, Senator Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Mandip Singh Gulati Indian	Director
NATSTEEL PHILIPPINES, INC. 27 Commerce and Industry Plaza, Campus cor. Mahogany Hill, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Haridhas Dilen Chinese	Supervisor Language Analyst

If you have any information/objection in the above mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. ALAN S. MACABOC, CESO III
Regional Director

ERRATUM

In the last issue(s) of Notice of Filing of application for Alien Employment Permit, the name of applying Entity should have been read as Lucio's Worldwide, #1 Jenny's Ave., Brgy. San Miguel, Pasig City and not as published.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

CLASSIFIEDS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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South Cotabato II Electric Cooperative Inc.
Jose Catolico Ave., Lagao, General Santos City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SOUTH COTABATO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INCORPORATED (SOCOTECO II) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

Warehouse Stocking Requirements for One (1) Year
BID 001_2012

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	FEE FOR BID DOCUMENTS (PHP)
1	CONDUCTOR ALUMINUM TYPE ACSR 336MCM	150,000 KM	1,850,000.00	5,000.00
2	CONDUCTOR WIRE SMOOTH #6 ACSR	200,000 KM	800,000.00	
3	CONDUCTOR WIRE SMOOTH #4 ACSR/AW	100,000 KM	1,000,000.00	
4	CONDUCTOR POLE 35 FT	300 pcs	1,800,000.00	5,000.00
5	CONDUCTOR POLE 40 FT	200 pcs	1,600,000.00	
6	CONDUCTOR POLE 45 FT	200 pcs	1,800,000.00	

SOCOTECO II will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on the project, as elaborated in which shall be open only to all interested parties who have purchased the Bidding Documents.

The schedule of bid activities is as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
ISSUANCE OF BIDDING DOCUMENTS	FEBRUARY 6 TO 8, 2012
PRE-BID CONFERENCE	FEBRUARY 8, 2012 @ 9:00 AM (SOCOTECO II CONFERENCE ROOM)
SUBMISSION OF BID	FEBRUARY 9, 2012 @ 9:00 AM
OPENING OF BIDS	FEBRUARY 9, 2012 @ 10:00 AM (SOCOTECO II CONFERENCE ROOM)

SOCOTECO II reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive deficiencies or irregularities therein without incurring any obligation whatsoever for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid.

SOUTH COTABATO II ELECTRIC COOP. INC.
Jose Catolico Avenue, Lagao, Gen. Santos City
Phone (083)5529466; (083) 3, (083)5521xxx; (083)5521xxx

(Sgd.) ERWIN JOHN RICHARD D. ALVARIO
BAC Chairperson

ERRATUM

In the advertisement of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Shellfish Bulletin No. 03 published in this paper on January 31, 2012, please take note that the latest area found to be positive for red tide toxin is Wawa, Bacid in Pangalusian and not of Wawintao Bay in Zandueta that was printed twice in the map.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
PCA Compound, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City
Telefax No. 929-05-07 / 929-80-74

Shellfish Bulletin No. 03
Series of 2012
(1st Monthly 2012)

Based on the latest laboratory results of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Local Government Units (LGUs), shellfish collected from the following bays in Zamboanga del Sur, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Bay in Zamboanga del Norte and Misamis Occidental, Misamis Bay in Camiguin, Butuan coastal waters (Masao-an, Lemon, Limbo, Filao Basanga, Gran, Bonbon and Samak), and Bohol Bay in Eastern Samar are still positive for paralytic shellfish poison that is beyond the regulatory limit. Moreover, these, Bacid in Pangalusian is now positive for red tide toxin.

All types of shellfish and finfish gathered from the areas shown above are **NOT SAFE** for human consumption. Fish, squids, shrimps, and crabs are safe for human consumption provided they are fresh and washed thoroughly, and internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed before cooking.

The following areas continue to be FREE from red tide toxin: coastal waters of Cavite, Lio Pilar, Palanguan, Navotas, and Bulacan in Manila Bay; coastal waters of Balinsasayao, Anda, and Alaminos in Pangasinan; coastal waters of Milagros and Mandaon in Masbate; Jiabong in Samar; Lagonoy in Camarines Sur; Bonsogon, Hilongos and Hindang in Leyte Bays in Puerto Princesa City, and Inner Honda Bay in Palawan; coastal waters of Pilar, President Roxas, Panitanhikan, Panay Roxas City, Mulan and Bugallon in Capiz; coastal waters of Ibajay, Nabas, Malinao, Buruanga, Batan, Kalibo, Numancia, Tangalan, Lezo, Makato, Banga, Libacao, Madalag, Balete, New Washington, Altavas, Malay, Nabas, Malinao, Ibajay, Tangalan, Lezo, Kalibo, Numancia, Batan, Buruanga

BUSINESS

Bank lending seen growing another 20% in '12

JP Morgan bullish on Philippines' banking sector

By Michelle V. Rosca

BANK lending in the Philippines is expected to grow by another 20 percent this year on the back of the rapid clientele[illegible] of more infrastructure projects in the country.

This is according to International financial services firm JP Morgan Chase & Co., which was bullish on the Philippine banking sector for 2012.

Adrian Mowat, emerging market and Asian equity strategist for JP Morgan, said that banks in the country are likely to see higher demand for loans this year given the need to help finance expensive public infrastructure projects.

Because of the banking sector's significant amount of assets and liquidity, Mowat added, it can afford to accommodate higher loan applications.

"Last year was a banner year for banks in terms of asset and loan growth. We expect it to maintain its favorable performance," Mowat said in a briefing.

He also expressed confidence that banks would keep their exposure to bad debts at manageable levels even as they release more loans.

Regulations have credited the decline in the exposure of banks to bad debts to the strict adherence to prudent lending standards.

The average non-performing loans (NPL) ratio of universal and commercial banks in the country fell in the 2-percent territory last year, thus hitting levels seen prior to the Asian financial crisis of 1997.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that savings NPL ratio—the proportion of bad debts to total loan portfolio—stood at 2.39 percent previous as of end-November 2011, better than the 3.00-percent registered as of the same month the previous year.

Over the same period, loan portfolio of the banks grew by 22.3 percent to P2.75 trillion.

"The main drivers for 2012 [as far as the economy is concerned] is increased infrastructure spending. Projects that have been fixed up before are likely to materialize this year, and this will help boost bank lending to above 20 percent," Mowat said.

Mowat referred to the infrastructure projects under the government's Public-Private Partnership (PPP) program, under which private firms are tapped to invest in public infrastructure projects.

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A gem of wisdom in the Corona impeachment trial

POINT OF LAW

Francis Lim

AT EACH session since Day 1 of the impeachment trial, important lessons are laid for future generations' reference.

Several legal evidentiary terms and principles have been defined upon. Witnesses were asked to be characterized as ordinary or expert witnesses. Even the meaning of authentication of documents has been discussed.

Objections to irrelevant, leading, misleading, argumentative and hypothetical questions were likewise raised in the context of the testimony of the witnesses so far presented.

We expect more to come—what with the prosecution including in its list of witnesses—without much thought perhaps—more than 100 prosecution witnesses.

Indeed, the impeachment trial shows the interplay between the rules of pleading and rules of evidence. More importantly it demonstrates the real-life interface between procedural rules and the constitutional rights of the individual citizen.

Of particular note in the recent past is the legal debate over paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 of the impeachment complaint.

These two paragraphs are subsumed under Article II of the impeachment complaint, which charges the Chief Justice of culpable violation of the Constitution and/or betrayal of public trust "when he failed to disclose to the public his statements of assets, liabilities, and net worth as required under Sec. 17, Art. XI of the 1987 Constitution."

By way of alibi, however, the impeachment complaint included paragraph 2.3, which states that "[i]t is also reported that some of the properties of Respondent are not included in his declaration of his assets, liabilities, and net worth, in violation of the anti-graft and corrupt practices act." Further, the complaint included paragraph 2.4, which alleges that "[r]espondent is likewise suspected, and accused of having accumulated ill-gotten wealth, acquiring assets of high values and keeping funds accounts with huge deposits."

So, why did the complainants make paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 mere riders to Article II and not separate grounds for impeachment? Why did they not meet the matters mentioned therein as facts?

Contrary to what many believe, this is not a case of poor draftsmanship. It was a deliberate decision.

The complainants carefully employed the words "reported[,]" "suspected" and "accused" because the Constitution requires that the complaint must be under oath.

By stating the matters as based on reports and suspicion, not as facts, they protect themselves from perjury charges, at the same time hoping that they would be able to smuggle in evidence on alleged ill-gotten wealth of the Chief Justice.

In layman's language, they want to have their cake and eat it, too.

But the ploy did not escape the sacrosanct legal minds of the defense panel.

They objected to any evidence on paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 on the ground that these allegations do not satisfy the requirements of pleading for a valid allegation in an impeachment complaint under both the Rules of Court and the Constitution.

What is not validly alleged cannot be proven in court, as the ever-astute Justice Garcia eloquently argued before the impeachment court.

The ruling

Not satisfied with registering a sweeping objection as ordinary trial lawyers would have done, the defense panel forced the issue and moved for a quick ruling.

In its ruling last week, the Senate barred the introduction of any evidence on paragraph 2.4.

Although the Senate could have been justified in excluding evidence on paragraph 2.3, the Senate decided to allow the panel to introduce evidence on the matter.

However, the Senate President made it crystal clear that the Senate will allow evidence on both paragraphs only if the prosecutors will identify with specificity what assets are not included in the SALN.

Gem of wisdom

The ruling strikes a balance between the interests of the state in an impeachment case, and the rights of a citizen guaranteed by the Constitution.

It acknowledges that an impeachment case is not purely a judicial proceeding, but a political exercise as well.

It accommodates the prosecution specifics plea for flexibility and liberality without sacrificing the basic rights of the respondent. It recognizes the unique circumstances surrounding this particular case.

Why did they say so?

First, in the interest of the public, the ruling allows evidence on other properties to the extent that they are not included in the SALN of the Chief Justice.

But to protect the constitutional rights of the individual citizen, the ruling inexplicably requires that the prosecution must specify in detail what properties are not included in the SALN before the Senate will allow evidence thereon.

It bars a fishing expedition on the part of the prosecution. The prosecution cannot request for a blanket subpoena of witnesses and documents (as they ostensibly did by requesting the court to subpoena bank documents without any specificity) in an effort to fish for evidence on what properties are not included in the SALN.

Evidently, the ruling gives meaning to a person's constitutional right to a fair and impartial trial, especially with the full powers of the Presidency rushed up against the Chief Justice.

Second, the ruling will help maintain the portrayal of the Chief Justice as guilty in the bar of public opinion. As noted by Senator Judge Gregorio Honasan, the trial outside the courtroom seems to be moving swifter than in the impeachment court.

Unquestionably indeed, the prosecution public relations machine has been in full gear with an hr-up even long before the impeachment trial started.

Since Day 1 of the trial, the prosecution panel has successfully portrayed the Chief Justice as guilty before the public. They exhibit their documents as evidence before they offer them in evidence.

In fine, these are not evidence until they are formally admitted by the court.

Obviously, this sensation was aired of the Chief Justice Corona's constitutional rights to be presumed innocent and due process of law.

To the extent that the ruling protects these constitutionally guaranteed rights without sacrificing the discovery of the truth, the ruling is full of wisdom that should merit the admiration of both the bar and the public. Kudos to the Senate President and the Senate!

The Corona case demonstrates beyond doubt why there is a bill of rights—to protect the individual from the vast powers of the state.

As Thomas Jefferson had said, a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government, and what no just government should refuse, or rest on inference.

To use the words of the Great Communicator, former US President Ronald Reagan, protecting the rights of even the least individual among us is basically the only reason the government has for even existing.

The author is a law professor at the Ateneo Law School. He can be contacted at mag_lim@yahoo.com.

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MAY THEY BE HAPPY AND JOYFUL.

IT IS GOD'S WISH TO BLESS AND PROSPER HIS PEOPLE SO THAT THEIR DAYS WILL BE FILLED WITH HAPPINESS AND JOY. [3 JOHN 2]
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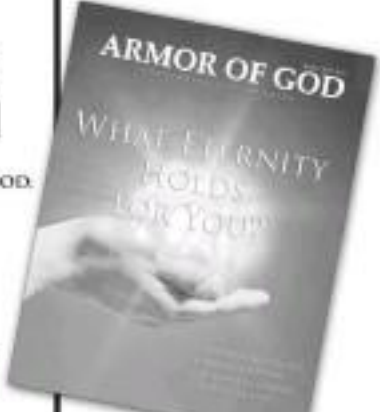

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LIFESTYLE Food

UPPERLIP
Hair
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DESSERT of poached pear with vanilla hazelnut mousse

WILD boar mushroom risotto

A first: Alliance Française serves Unesco Heritage meal

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Arnix

Milestone event presents French gastronomic meal now included in the World Heritage List

HOW ELSE to celebrate the inclusion of the French Gastronomic Meal in Unesco's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, by Bon vivh exactly Unesco's gastronomic stand. And where else to celebrate it best than at Alliance Française de Manille (AFM) which subsumes French culture and language.

Paintings and historical sites are part of tangible cultural heritage. In contrast, "intangibles" aren't to be touched, such as "oral traditions, performing arts, rituals and spatial skills or make crafts and food..."

And so that dinner was a way of affirming that, indeed, a French gastronomic meal is part of French identity and a source of pleasure.

Three French chefs were tasked to translate the lesson into dishes—Marc Aubry of Cocoparc, Cyrille Samson of Brasserie Cocoa and Laurent Malreval of Dessert Station, Corp. And for a short while before cocktails were served, they ate us talk about how they arrived at the menu.

They all planned together, all the chefs said, instead of assigning dishes to specific chefs. They assured that flavors would be fresh even if some ingredients were sourced from their home country, like the scallops from Brittany. The dishes would also be representative of different regions of France.

All three chefs have been living and working in the country for years and the common working experience is with Intercontinental Manila at different times. Through their own restaurants and businesses, AFM and former wine connoisseur, Wine, after all, is an integral part of French cooking.

With the arrival of French Ambassador Thierry Mejia de Silouen and his wife, dinner began though not before the ambassador's welcome, remarks by the working committee members—Maurice Recio-Ongpin (Alliance Française president), Stephane Dauchiloni (executive director—and a toast by Hôte Frederic Jan Macia (board director).

Old and new

Traditional and modern combined to the aspic of basil and tomatoes and a basin of goat cheese taken with a dry but aromatic white Bordeaux, Chateau Bernet 2010 from deux-Mers.

The next dish we were told created some problems for Bernie Ilao because the poached egg was difficult to pair with wine. He turned it on one of France's 12 top wines, Domaine Huet Vouvray Sec 1e Mont 2006, made from a 100-percent chenin blanc with a coffee aroma. Sim had to eat the dish four times to get it right. I wouldn't have minded because the egg with upscale and truffle cream was a favorite at our table.

Scallops seared in almond

A SPICY 22

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French food you can put in the middle of the table and share

"EEEH, SMORNIN'!" the Ingot's daughter [Deirdre] drilled, as if to say 'stop cheap bal' "Why are they offering us dinner in a French restaurant?" she asked, in condescending ignorance. "Yeah 'cos kind-assured" I explained as I ordered the dish, remembering the glories of fresh sardines. "Hip. Arsh ting for gine-ery manarap sa manila, ano?" I said haughtily.

The French restaurant is Brasserie Cicou, the latest addition to the restaurant scene of Greenhills in San Juan. The man behind the sardine recipe is chef Cyril Soenen, of Prince Albert Saint [remember the scene at the Hotel InterContinental in Makati?]. He later blazed his own trail in fine French cuisine with his own Restaurant Cicou at the Hotel Celeste on Pinay Road in Makati. Cicou in Makati closed in 2010, to the disappointment of chef Cyril's fans, but has happily reopened as Brasserie Cicou in Greenhills.

In a matter of fact, fresh sardines are a much-appreciated delicacy, with marinated sardine recipes featured in no less than magazines like food and, thereby savour. If you go there [cook, you are guaranteed delicousness. And if fresh sardines are not a restaurant's strength, you can more often than not be sure they were purchased that morning, because those are easily and don't freeze well.

At Brasserie Cicou, chef Cyril Soenen uses fresh sardines that he buys from the market. These are served simply in an olive oil marinade, with greens and goat cheese and fresh tapenade on the side. But it is a burst of freshness in your mouth that you will remember for days and even wish to interview at home.

Of course, there are more adventurous flavours: a version of duck liver and pork kimchee, simply a.k.a. oxtango, pan-seared foie gras. The white cheese are all beautifully encrusted in Cicou. From meats to have favorite recipe "fine dining" options that are no different from one restaurant to the next (along with eh-eye and a mean burger). This time, though, instead of fine dining fare, what distinguishes Cicou are their hearty French recipes.

Greenhills is now Frenchified with Brasserie Cicou, which serves fine French food without the fuss, including sardines

Food to share

In a phone interview with chef Cyril after three visits to Cicou, I found out why. "We want to show that French food is not just fine dining but also, like Filipino or Spanish cuisine, food that you can put in the middle of the table and share." This time, chef Cyril shares with his customers recipes from home.

And what a home it must be! Chicken à Guy au Vin. The chicken is marinated in red wine, seared on each side, sliced with chicken jus and only then slowly cooked in the oven. Duck in Camembert, another traditional French dish using duck leg confit, pork belly and Cicou's own homemade pork sausage, served with braised white beans.

Beef is the pressure [shrapnel] yet absolutely pleasant tingles [pronounced: ong-lay], a.k.a. Hanger Steak. Personally, I still prefer a beef tenderloin, but chef Cyril highlights the beef's flavor, as it requires no sauce with it due to the fullness of the flavors of this particular cut. This point is better made with the beef sarsaw, which defies its name [sarsaw: salsa] and comes alive in your mouth.

But the star of the hearty dishes, to my mind, is Cicou's version of Lyonnaise Braised Ox Tongue. Traditionally, the chef explained, this is made with beef tongue since, for us Cicou, chef Cyril makes his own sauce which more delicously savory but it's the texture of the ox tongue, not me in the first way that we are used to but sliced, that makes the difference. The result is bite-sized meat that defines the full savory goodness of the special sauce.

The parade of hearty meals is capped with a hearty dessert. For some time now, finders on Facebook have been raving about Kusang Asian. The menu are not without basis. It is a sound, savory cake [Tender like croquembouche but is more sturdy] but it is delectable buttery and topped with a salted caramel ice cream that beautifully contrasts with the rich buttery flavor of the pastry. Warning, though: it is very rich!

While all this hearty reading, it is best to visit the restaurant with the objective of sharing your meal. The servings are heaping and even the comfortable wooden tables create the seating for a tribunal, so appointed to a still. Instead. The best way setting is also reflected on the prices, which are very reasonable compared to fine dining French fare (ranges of P200 per appetizer; P400-P500 for mains; P180-P200 for desserts).

Finally, Greenhills a Frenchified—and the right way!

Brasserie Cicou is at 37 Annapolis St. [beside Old Montessorio], San Juan; tel. no. 6435686. Open for lunch and dinner, closed on Mondays. Reservations recommended. Major credit cards accepted. Wheelchair-accessible.

A first: Alliance Française serves . . .

From page C1

and terrific of small capon gave different textures and flavors that melded well and was taken with the best example of a char-dessay wine, Domaine Marc Tolin Saint-Aubin en Brenilly 2008.

Foie gras made its entrance as a course in the solid meat and mushroom sense, the pastry so light and crisp. An arugula salad with mushroom dressing was a light counterpoint to the rich main ingredient, but the full-bodied Chateau La Lasse de Monbrisac 2007 was a compliment.

Something from Normandy came by way of the green apple brother with calvados. This was also the time to relax a bit with some of the guests giving their views of the dinners. It was a demonstration of the social aspect of eating.

A roasted stuffed capon served with vegetables and cabbage confit and chasseur pieces next. Appropriately in the included (I do not object) full remarks. It helped that a fine dessert was taken with this, Chateau Cayde Fargeres 2007 Cotes de Castillon.

Of course there had to be French cheeses—Saint-Marcellin [runny one's cheese from the Rhone-Alpes region], Epoisses [soft Burgundy cheese] and Roquefort [sheep's milk blue cheese from the south].

While we tried desperately to exclude bread to lessen the calories, we succumbed to the temptation when we smelled the lovely bread. A deep-flavored Jean's Quinta de Bonfin 1996 accompanied the cheeses.

Chef Laurent, on seeing our half-finished desserts, commented how dishes that some before tend to make the diner too full. If I had watches stomach, I would finish off the meal with fresh fruit with vanilla ice cream, mousse and caramelized tuile and the not-too-sweet dessert wine of Chateau Doisy-Daene Barsac 2004 to the last drop.

For those of us who stayed for a while digesting—apart from the dinner—the idea of an intangible cultural heritage, coffee, liqueur of fine tongue. Dominic Jouissen [DJ], and self more: more were on hand— praline tart made with peanuts, vanilla chocolate and pistachio macaroon.

To Ric Mojica and the Mediterranean diet Hipnis, Indy Greene, Rhonda's have been recognized by Enseva. Pitra will be proclaimed this year to whom is our turn?

CHEF Cyrille Soenen

PASTRY chef Laurent Mistral

SCALLOPS and veal ragout sarladi

SCALLOPED stuffed Bresse's capon

PINEAPPLE tarte

SHAR, tapioca, tomatoes and goat cheese sapanta

'LECHON' PASTA
Chef's Lab offers Lechon Pasta infused with lemon grass. The pasta uses also carries the winning ingredient. Visit Chef's Lab at Bonjon Circle, Forbes Town Center, The Fort, tel. 8167313.

Egg and rice dishes

PORTERHOUSE LAMB CHOPS
Pablo Carlito Old Manila Bistro and Steak House offers Angus Ribeye, Tbone Strip, T-bone, Parmesan Lamb Chops, Kare-kare, Lechon Baka at Mayor, Pork Humba, Salisbury Steak. Pablo Carlito Old Manila Bistro and Steak House is at G/F Sweet Residence 8 Lapu St., Brgy South Triangle, QC.; tel. 8217160.

CAJUN FRIED CHICKEN
Combo options from the dishes to large for two. Save as much as 20 percent off on large servings of Cajun Fried Chicken, Grilled Pork Chops, Barbecue-style Baby Back Ribs, Barbecued Shrimps, Seafood Jambalaya, posing only for regular sizes until the second week of February. For reservations and inquiries, call 6353001 to 04 / 8312320 and 8366338.

PH's first formal culinary school celebrates 15 years

By Erica Paredes
Contributor

THE CENTER for Culinary Arts or CCA has produced quite a lot of successful chefs in its 15 years of existence. It has given diplomas to 3,000 industry practitioners, 2,000 offshore chefs, 800 restaurateurs and 50 celebrity chefs—and that is just scratching the surface.

Despite these great achievements, you still see CCA posting up its banners, for this entire operation was born out of a humble bakeshop called Greggy, some 15 years ago. It still continues to break new ground with the ambition of a newbie, but the wisdom of a seasoned chef working his way around the kitchen. CCA was the first formal culinary school established in the Philippines, and its founder, Sisanta Guerrero, is not only a culinary expert, but also possesses about saving the environment and counseling people.

When CCA first opened, it introduced the first formal Diploma in Culinary Arts and Technology Management in the country. Eventually, it added a Baking and Pastry Arts Diploma course as well. And to push the envelope even further, it strengthened its short courses and started other programs for both beginners and professional chefs.

To celebrate its 15th year as an industry leader, CCA recently had a gala dinner at its newly renovated main campus along Kalayaan Avenue. Guests were treated to a four-course meal of some of the school's new items. To start, there was the Signature Dry Salad—crispy fried pompeng shrimp with Mesclun and Mango Vinaigrette. This was followed by the clear Veal Filling Minestrone Pistou Mate—mirepoix soup flavored with shrimp and all leaves.

The main course was delightful Australian beef, braised in tomatoes and lemongrass and served with sweet potato mash and roasted summer vegetables [asking for dessert, guests were treated to Filipino favorites like Cassava, Bibingka with Latik, Sabo mo Sa Sabaw and Inchilada].

CCA is the first culinary institution in the Philippines accredited by the American Culinary Federation Foundation, which is the premier organization of professional chefs in North America. The school's quality and excellence received that accreditation in 2006 and again in 2010.

Aside from the main campus, CCA also holds satellite classes in Starwood Mall, a "shop, cook, learn and earn" program at the Fairview's Market! branch and a restaurant school at SM Mall of Asia called Cocoon.

For inquiries on diploma or short courses, contact Center for Culinary Arts at 6356661-61; e-mail marketing@cca.manila.com. For course outlines and more information, visit www.cca.manila.com

Back in the Philippines doing what he loves best—cooking

Swiss Christian Werdenberg, self-confessed diehard of the Philippines, is the new executive chef of Dusit Thani Manila

By Margie Baga-Reyes

"I LOVE the Philippines, that's why I came back," says Christian Werdenberg, the newest executive chef of Dusit Thani Manila.

Werdenberg used to work in another hotel in Manila, also as an executive chef, for two years before flying to Beijing to continue his culinary calling.

He, according to the 45-year-old Swiss, is no stranger to the Philippines that he wanted to return.

Given that he likes the people, the food and the beach, Werdenberg has always been thrilled working in big hotels in Manila and their varied clientele.

He officially joined them eight months ago and, so far, he's enjoying the company of his newfound family.

"I can't compare the two hotels because both have diverse clients, and the location, concepts and food combos are far different from each other," says Werdenberg. "Each is really special, unique and exciting for me."

As a passionate culinary artist, he admits there's nothing much to work on from in terms of its existing dining outlets. No need to redo or revamp because each of its classy restaurants is already doing great well, especially Unos, Brasserie, Toscani and Buddy.

"I just did a little enhancement on Buddy," says Werdenberg, explaining that the all-day dining buffet eatery needed a more modern look, as well as quality food.

"I don't like on the buffet very filling items that make you feel full right away," he says. "I always use a lot of live salad and pasta salad, all those luxury stuff. I like less but more quality food. I called fresh Food theme."

For Unos, Werdenberg is working on a new menu concept. When he joined them, Unos was known for its Mediterranean cuisine which, for Werdenberg, was quite confusing. It needs real identity.

Adding regular dishes what they really want to eat, the local staff found out that apart from Unos's pizza and pasta, people also crave for more progressive cooks. Steaks are among Unos's best-selling items.

"So I came up with an Italian grill kind of concept," says Werdenberg. "Still keeping the Italian authenticity, we are more focused on our grill items, either beef or veal steaks accompanied with delicious pasta and pizza."

For Unos, Werdenberg leaves everything in the Japanese chef.

CHILEAN Seabass with Roasted Pepper Compote, Capers and Green Olives

CHEF Christian Werdenberg enjoys a classic, crispy lechon and caregong noodles.

With Hengkeong, he leaves it to the Thai chef.

"Food-wise and cooking-wise, they're already perfect," he says. "We need to touch it. In fact, I am not in a position to tell them how to cook their own national food."

Training

Training of kitchen people is going on. For Werdenberg, it's important to give them clear directions and recipes of new dishes.

"If it's a new dish, we all cook it and taste it together," he says. "In this way, they easily get to understand how things are done and how to do them properly."

Werdenberg likes big banquets. He enjoys preparing custom-made menus for Dusit clients. For him, the bigger the better the more, the merrier. He thrives in big functions, like corporate events and huge weddings, and gets excited planning and preparing the food.

"I'm drawn to that," he says. "I like the hectic atmosphere in the kitchen. Of course, you have your temper if things don't work your way. But it's very temporary. Afterwards, we all go home and forget about it."

Through the years, Dusit has maintained its strength as one of the five-star hotels that offer authentic dining experience.

"Regardless of nationalities, people are really looking for authentic food," says Werdenberg. "I think that's our strong point because we have fantastic Japanese and Thai restaurants."

But, with all the competition around, does he know he has to live on his toes all the time?

"We have to keep on changing and improving the quality step by step," he says. "Our edge is consistency and quality. That's the only strategy that will sustain and guarantee success."

Culinary journey

As far as he remembers, Werdenberg has been tinkering in the kitchen since he was 14 years old back in Switzerland. He started here by helping prepare and cook the family food.

Culinary blood runs in the family. His brother, cousins and other relatives are mostly chefs in his hometown. His elder brother, Hanspeter, has been the most influential in his career.

"At first, I was not decided whether I would be a butcher, a baker or a cook," recalls Werdenberg. "After my practicum, I saw how cooking would combine everything into one. My brother really pushed me hard to be good in my field. He trained me in the kitchen."

After I graduated, he helped me find my first job. But, after my first week, I promised to myself that I would never work in a place where my brother used to work. We were always compared. They would say my brother is better than me."

Werdenberg has worked in various hotels all over the world, including the Singapore Island Country Club (Alkon Mia Olah), Hilton Tokyo, Hilton Diaoyutai Grand (Beh Orang) in Japan, Hilton Zurich Airport in Switzerland, New World Hotel Kowloon (Renaissance Kowloon Hotel) in Hong Kong, and Sofitel Wanda Beijing.

Leisure time

On his free time, he loves to go on a road trip, either going up north or down south. He drives with his Filipino girlfriend.

"At first, I thought of some exotic food along the way. He likes leftovers, crispy lechon and crispying tai locks. He's born in Batangas, Cebu, Baguio, Tagaytay, etc.

He relaxes by cooking.

"I enjoy cooking on my day off or even in the evening after work," says Werdenberg. "I'd go home and cook pasta or grill meat. I'd have my Pale Pilsen beer, my music and DVD. I'm good. That's de-stressing for me."

Here's a recipe from Werdenberg which he says he would typically prepare on his free time.

Chilean Seabass with Roasted Pepper Compote, Capers and Green Olives

Shared stock:
100 g Spanish black mussels
5 ml olive oil
2 g garlic
2 g shallots
1 sprig thyme
50 ml white wine
Sauce:
12 ml olive oil
5 g shallots
2 g garlic
50 g Scotl (pink)
15 g Spanish chorizo sausage
50 ml chicken stock
10 ml mussel stock
10 ml cream
2 pcs raw scallops without shell

For mussel stock: Heat olive oil in a sauce pot, add chopped garlic and shallots and let it sweat until infused and fragrant. Add the mussels, toss well and deep, add the white wine. Cover with a lid and let the mussels steam and open up. Remove mussels from the shell and set aside. Reserve the mussel stock.

For the sauce: Heat olive oil in a saucepan, add chopped garlic, shallots and chorizo. Let it sweat until infused and fragrant. Add the soaked bread and toss well, add chicken stock and the mussel stock and simmer until the bread is soft. Add fresh cream and blend well using a blender until smooth and frothy.

For scallops: Season the scallops with salt and pepper and sear very lightly with clarified butter in a very hot pan and cook quickly on both side. Place scallops and the reserved steamed mussels in a serving dish and pour on the bread's chorizo sauce.

E-mail: bagga@inquirer.com.ph

Good place for Chinese dining and fellowship

WORD OF MOUTH

Sunnidy Dacuya

ONCE EVERY two months, my high school classmates and I get together for lunch. I look forward to these meals because we always have so much fun—a lot of laughter and a lot of good food.

Among my former schoolmates are three lawyers, two pharmacists, some doctors, a popular composer, a couple of successful businessmen and a cook.

Funny how the quiet, introverting ones where they were in school have been married three. Funny how the most outgoing ones have ended up successful, too.

However, the moment we sit at the table, all titles are off and we become carefree. 14-year-olds again. Time goes back to when your only worries were your half-hearted studies and your love going for your crush teacher to believe that the dog ate your homework. Great times!

We have dined in Thai, Japanese, and other restaurants. It is usually a good friend, Joel, who used to bully me at school but I have forgiven him since, who chooses the venue. This guy will not stop looking for ways to exercise in order to stay healthy (yes, he looks like he's in his 30s) and he is always on the lookout for restaurants that offer healthy food.

This time, I was not involved whether I would be a butcher, a baker or a cook," recalls Werdenberg. "After my practicum, I saw how cooking would combine everything into one. My brother really pushed me hard to be good in my field. He trained me in the kitchen."

After I graduated, he helped me find my first job. But, after my first week, I promised to myself that I would never work in a place where my brother used to work. We were always compared. They would say my brother is better than me."

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10 ml cream
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Sunnidy Dacuya

previously because he is a regular at Dimsum Break. (Well, actually, all of us are.)

Jeff had told me about this place a couple of months back. But my first experience was not as pleasant as this second one. Previously, the place was packed (Tita told it recently so), and I was with my family. We were given a table next to the kitchen. It was too busy and noisy for us.

This impression changed when my friends and I were given a table at a corner away from the hustle and bustle of a busy restaurant. This time around, I was able to appreciate the fine food this place serves.

Good Chinese place

Tang Chow is a dim sum and teahouse that serves good Chinese cuisine. There are a lot of Chinese restaurants with this name but they have a different owner. The one I tried is along Libis in C5 at the Shopwise complex on E. Rodriguez Avenue.

The menu selection is wide and the dishes are the familiar ones you find in most Chinese restaurants, but are done well here. There are two criteria I use in saying I enjoyed a place. One, I want to bring my family there, and they'll want to come for the food. This place made me want to do both.

We had Tang Chow fried rice, steamed fish fillet topped with garlic, sizzling beef tenderloin with black pepper sauce and beef tenderloin Chinese style, Ice Hue Chai veggies and hot prawn salad. All of these I highly recommend.

The chicken feet dish was good enough. I also enjoyed the fish fillet with Black Beans for dessert.

Some of the dishes I haven't tried yet. Based on the Tang Chow Seafood rice, I am outside the Salted Fish Fried Rice will also be good.

Others I haven't tried: the Sweet and Sour Pork or Chicken, Fish Fillet, Lemon Chicken, Fried Scallop with salt and pepper, Fried Prawns with salt and pepper, Roast Crab or Squid in salt and pepper, Oyster Lobe Chinese, White Chicken, Fish Fillet with Bean Curd in Clay Pot, Sliced Chicken or Clay Pot, Sliced Duck with fresh lettuce, and Taiwan pechay with garlic.

Some of the dim sum also look interesting. The meat duck soup good the first time I had it, and the okra was not crispy enough.

Our Chinese restaurants in Manila have indeed gone a much higher notch. Places like Causeway Seafood restaurant along Aguinaldo and San Rafael, Dampa del Mercado, Sean Dean restaurant, and this place are samples of these delicious dishes. Tang Chow Dim Sum and Teahouse is at 1535 E. Rodriguez Ave. (C5), Quezon City, tel. 3455-0588.

Chelsea our "mentor" with the usual talks about aches and pains, and the various health issues that come with people our age, we admonished and looked forward to our next lunch. Loads of laughter, delicious food and great company. What a combination!

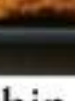
Happy eating!

Visit sunnidydacuya.blogspot.com. Follow on Twitter @sunnidydacuya.

PDI LIFESTYLE KITCHEN-TESTED RECIPE

CHOCOLATE-Chip Bread Pudding

Chocolate-chip bread pudding



DO-IT-YOURSELF

YUMMY CHAVANCO

Cook's tip

- For easier creaming of the butter: Soften the butter slightly and cut into chunks before creaming in an electric mixer.
- For best results, use good quality semisweet chocolate chips.
- Likewise, use good quality butter.

A FEW weeks ago, I gave a DIY recipe for cheese and prosciutto spread using grated Magnolia queso de bola. In that recipe, I suggested that the trimmings from the sandwiches be made into bread pudding.

Here's one of the best recipes for bread pudding I've ever tried. The pudding has the creamy texture of a custard while the chocolate chips add a scrumptious chocolate flavor that will surely satisfy the palate of any chocoholic. Adding to its appeal is this top, which is a nice, toasty, crusty brown.

For the bread, you can use the trimmings from making cheese pimiento sandwiches, or just use a small loaf of bread, or even bread leftovers. Old bread, unless from fresh ones, is preferable. Just make sure the bread is not stale.

Chocolate-Chip Bread Pudding

- 1 c butter
- 2 c sugar
- 6 eggs, slightly beaten
- 4 c fresh milk
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 c semisweet chocolate chips
- 4 c bread chunks

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).

Lightly grease a 9" x 13" baking pan. Or, spray the pan with nonstick cooking spray.

Cream butter in bowl of electric mixer. Add sugar, eggs, milk, vanilla extract and nutmeg. Using a large spoon or spatula, stir in chocolate chips and bread chunks and mix well (no need to use electric mixer).

Pour into the prepared baking pan and bake for one hour or until it turns solid and the top is golden brown and crusty. Let stand a few minutes before serving. Best served warm.

Makes 12-16 servings.

Visit the author's blog at www.mymagicbiscuits.com and www.facebook.com/mymagicbiscuits, follow @KarmaChavanco on Twitter.

The best of Barrio Fiesta: crispy 'pata' and 'kare-kare'

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggee Sabroso

A BILLBOARD along Edsa—"Crispy Pata Nating Iriburan, kaya ang Filipinos!"—made me realize how long—or, more than ever, how short—it has been since I've been to Barrio Fiesta. It's been ages, and I've been missing their crispy pata and kare-kare.

So the longest time, Barrio Fiesta was the place to go to for a deliciously cooked home-style Filipino meal.

In the midst of the latest revolutions, many of us have forgotten about the contributions of Barrio Fiesta.

Not overdone cuisine steeped in layers of nostalgia have made us crave for comfort food, which Barrio Fiesta has been giving Filipinos.

In the '50s, Aida Evangelista, fondly called mama Chit, entered the food business and the success of Everlasting Preserves, a company owned by her husband, Bonifacio Ongpauco Jr.

Armed with what her grandchildren called a "killer recipe" for hamburger, mama Chit opened the first Barrio Fiesta in 1958 at the Ongpauco ancestral home in Cubao.

Alongside her hero Asin—her coveted silver service family dishes that became equally famous such as crispy pata, "sosa & roll" (shrimp wrapped with ground pork, covered with crunchy tempura-like batter), sizzling sisig-style and crispy chicken.

I asked Coco Ongpauco Tantoco, mama Chit's daughter, what dish her mom was proudest of. She said Crispy Pata and Kare-Kare.

Oh, the crispy pata. I was told that it was Coco's brother, Boni Ongpauco, who first thought of this one.

It was his "sideline." He sold deep-fried inches-long to the restaurant.

A canned-heavy compromise. Real success very successful in promoting Our product, says Coco. But there was a limited supply of the hero ingredient Chit concocted a recipe that, time, using raw pork legs. Guess pork legs are more what is known as the main components.

I attended Barrio Fiesta to celebrate Chinese New Year with some of my good Filipino-Chinese friends and indulged to heap with Adobo, Pinakbet(ne, Adobo Barrio Style, Crispy Pata, Kare-Kare, Sinigang (grilled meats, sweetened and vegetables).

Everything tasted just as it should. But their food/presence, was simply tremendous—rich in flavor, taste, nutrient-rich! Truly a well-executed, Filipino version of the classic. It was everyone's favorite!

The Kare-Kare sauce is the one remains the best—large chunks of pork and chicken with spoil eggs served in a thick brown adobo sauce that is more "gravy" like in consistency. So delicious and gladly will (mine clearly the same, as I could it.

Their Crispy Pata will be dead-lie—crisp on the outside, tender, juicy succulent on the inside.

I'm sure to know that in this fast-paced, ever-changing world of ours, there are some things that remain unchanged and that Barrio is still one of those places we can run to if we want to have a taste of what we have tried ours like, cooked "authentically" and "originally" as they did when they first opened their doors in 1958.

According to the Ongpauco, when you go to Barrio Fiesta, it's not only for the food. It is also because it brings back memories. For all, who have celebrated an occasion be it a birthday or a graduation at Barrio Fiesta!

Barrio Fiesta's delicious Bouillabaisse

- 6c chicken stock
- 1c flour
- ¼ pack cream of mushroom powder/mix
- ½ c evaporated milk
- 50 g butter, grated
- 50 g bell pepper, chopped
- 50 g carrots, chopped
- 50 g onions, chopped
- 100 g crab
- 50 g mussels, in shell
- 50 g shrimps, unpeeled
- 50 g clams, in shell

Thicken the stock with flour, cream of mushroom powder, evaporated milk and grated cheese.

Add chopped bell pepper, carrots and onions and simmer until soft.

Add crab, mussels, clams and shrimps and simmer until cooked and still tender.

I'd like to thank Mich Tumaro for all his help with this article. (Call Barrio Fiesta 421-6141; 725-7696.)

Heirloom recipe: Bahra

Lord of the Chinese New Year family heirloom recipes—Buddha Goes Bahra—given during the Chinese New Year. He said to sweetness and luscious red color symbolize good luck and prosperity.

- ½ k pound pork, 20 percent fat, 80 percent lean or pork from thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp each fish and soy sauce
- ½ c sugar
- 1 ½ tsp 5-spice powder
- ½ tsp cinnamon powder
- 2 tsp white pepper
- 1 k pillago lump
- Chili powder to taste
- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 tbsp corn liquor (Mei Kui Lu Chiew)
- Red food color, optional
- 1 tbsp liquid smoke, optional

Combine everything in a bowl and mix. Marinate in refrigerator for four hours, preferably overnight.

Oil baking sheet. Put 2 c of the meat mixture and spread. Put plastic wrap over meat and with a rolling pin, roll as thinly as possible.

Put in a 170°F oven to dry for 15 minutes or until firm to the touch. Remove from the oven and cut into pieces.

Charcoal grill before serving. If not serving immediately, keep in the freezer and char grill before serving.

Get more Chef's Heirloom recipes in her cookbook. She also makes a delicious lasagna with fresh pasta. (Call 09.17.445.2220.)

My book "Kitchen Stories 3, The Interviews—My Lifelines to Baking, Cooking and Living" is now available at all leading bookstores. (Call 6474744.)

For my cooking class schedule, call tel. 0917.445.2220; 0908.2572246; 4636696; 9296296.

E-mail reggee@inquirer.com.ph

HAHA: Cin Evangelista

ORIGINAL: Barrio Fiesta in 1958

the SAPPORO Eatwell Plate

SAPPORO

Stuffed Salmon with Creamy Sauce in Pinoy Pesto

Wellness Facts

Noodlelicious Healthy

Vote online for Pinoy bet in world bartending championships

FILIPINO BARTENDING titan Ira Banzuela Ong will represent the Philippines and Asia in the forthcoming TGIFriday's World Bartending Championship in Dallas, Texas.

An online voting competition for the "Favorite Bartender Award" is ongoing until July 22.

Slated this February, the TGIFriday's World Bartending Championship is an annual event that brings together all of TGIFriday's best bartenders from across the globe to compete in the mixology finals, showcase of bar drinkmaking, including technical knowledge and accuracy, and in the bottle-flipping and drink-tossing knowledge competitions.

Ong, from TGIFriday's Makati, has made a name for himself in the local, regional and international bartending scenes. He officially represented the Philippines in the 2009 WBC held in the T.G.I. Friday's Worldwide Headquarters in Carrollton, Texas. After an intense 8-month competition between 12 individuals, eight from around the globe, Ong was adjudged second place.

The TGIFriday's World Bartender Championship, which started in the late '80s in the USA and in the Philippines in 2008, has become a much-anticipated event in different branches worldwide.

Vote for Ong online at your favorite Bartender at www.worldbtc.com/finalists. One vote per person per day is allowed.

ENTERTAINMENT

Lira Soriano-G. Velarde

Not sure about marrying again

HEARD

TERRIFIC-crooner married Jennifer Lopez said on Monday she doesn't know if she'll wed again, after splitting up with her Latin pop singer husband Marc Anthony last year. "It's not time to think about that yet, do you know what I mean?" the singer told Mary Lauren on the TV talk show "Today" /Reuters

SARAH Geronimo: Not ready for salmon

Sarah on Vice Ganda: We're okay ... I hope

By Marinel R. Cruz

SINGER-ACTRESS Sarah Geronimo was unaware of the rumor that comedian Vice Ganda had thumbed down her guest appearance on his MTB-CBN show "Gandang Gabi Vice," where she was supposed to promote her latest movie.

"I'm clueless about what happened. I just knew that I was scheduled to appear on the show but I had been given very little time to promote the film ... I assumed that there was a conflict in the schedule," Sarah said. The film she referred to was Star Cinema's rom-com "Won't Last a Day Without You," released in November last year.

Sarah insisted that she and Vice Ganda were fine. "There's an ok between us—emis tayo weds," The two previously worked in the Wish Outshoo drama-comedy "Home Sweet Home," released in July 2010.

Coincidentally her coming TV show "Sarah G. Live", which premieres on Feb. 18, will replace Vice Ganda's program.

She likened the musical variety show's concept to that of Wish Outshoo's "Su-

SHOWBIZ

■ **Carmina, Zoren, twins in MTRCB infomercial** Cheer Factor /D5

Apo songs inspire film

By Allan Policarpio
Contributor

CHRIS Martinez

IN 2006, the music of the Apo Hiking Society took centre stage in "Kung saPO Iibang", a chart-topping compilation album of the pop trio's biggest hits, crowned by the country's hottest contemporary bands.

This year, marking a tribute to the enduring music of Danny Javier, Bobby Gonzalez and Jim Paredes to in the words...a one-hour musical film, "I Dos Bi Dos, Bi Dos," to be handcrafted by Erabel Productions.

Dream project

"I Dos" is a dream project for United president and CEO Tony Ghotia. he's been toying with the idea for years.

"Apo's music is timeless and has crossed generations," Ghotia, whose past projects include "La Vina Luna" and "Crying Ladies," told the Inquirer in a recent story conference.

Paredes, who was present at the conference, admitted that he was anxious before the film's musical director, Vincent de Jesus, presented his arrangements of the songs. "I was worried that I might not be able to hide my disappointment if I didn't like what I heard," Paredes said.

Instead, Paredes shed a few tears upon hearing the Jesus' take on "Pasalamat," especially when the cast started singing along. "It was beautiful," Paredes said. "I loved it."

About time

Chris Martinez, who wrote the script and will direct "I Dos," said he had carefully studied the 37 Apo songs to be used in the film. He told the Inquirer, "Love is the biggest driving force of Apo's music, be it about romance or friendship. I realized I shouldn't veer away from that, so I wrote a story that reflects the songs' sentiments."

"I Dos," which revolves around two bickering families, will star Gary Valenciano, Jaclene Padilla, Ogie Alcasid, Eugene Domingo, Sam Concepcion and Thirdy Dos Santos. It is set for release in mid-2012.

Asked how the songs would propel the plot, Martinez explained that the treatment would be similar to recent hit musicals like "Mamma Mia!"—in which the characters break into song during moments of heightened emotion. "It's about time we did our own musical film that is contemporary and fun," said Martinez.

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Sarah on Vice...

Pretaga D1

...ponsta," and "The Sharon Graves Show."

"The producers don't wait for us just sing; they want viewers to know more about the [illegible] through the show," Sarah said.

"Mine's Last a Day Without You," her reunion movie with Gerald Anderson, reportedly made P87 million at the box office. Their first project together, "Catch Me, I'm In Love," released in March 2011, made P120 million.

Her next movie for Star Cinema, with John Lloyd Cruz, starts shooting this month.

Advice

"I'm working hard for my love, and can't see myself getting married until at least 30," Sarah, 22, said during a recent media gathering for Julie Anne's "Always Magkaibigan" Chickenjoy Meal, which she co-hosts. "I honestly don't think I'm ready to entertain suitors."

Valentine's Day is a regular work day for her. "It's not a day I look forward to," she said. "My advice to single girls out there is: You don't have to give your heart away just because it's the day of hearts." (tarsa@inquirer.com.ph)

Films on poverty, failed US war vs drugs top Sundance

PARK CITY, Utah— "Beasts of the Southern Wild" and "The House I Live In" won top awards at the Sundance Film Festival last weekend.

Directed by first-timer and set in impoverished Louisiana, "Beasts of the Southern Wild" picked up the jury prize for best drama, one night before a father and a daughter.

The documentary winner, "The House I Live In," was one of many dozen that looked at a struggling America at Sundance 2012, with its examination of America's failed war on drugs and critiques of its drug policies, court system and prisons.

Terrible war

"The war on drugs is a terrible war on America," said director Eugene Jarecki.

Special juries of industry professionals were on winners, but audiences also vote for their favorites.

"The Intervention," which stars Rashida Jones and John Hawkes and is about a man's quest to lose his virginity, while mostly confined to an iron lung, won the audience award for best drama.

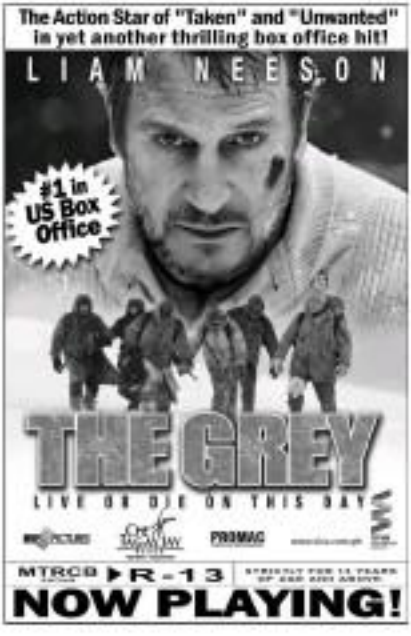
The film, based on the life of poet and journalist Mark O'Brien, fetched one of the highest selling prices at the festival—a reported $4 million.

Audience award for documentary was given to "The Invisible War," about sexual assault in the US military.

Other documentary special jury prizes went to "Love Free or Die," about the Episcopal Church's first openly gay bishop; Gene Robinson; and "Bully," about the the new antibullying movement.

Another film that won a special jury prize was "Compliance," about a prank caller who was detained for 81 days last year.

Sundance is the largest US festival for independent movies. Dozens of films premiered at the festival, which ran from January 19 to 29.



GARFIELD

A. GIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY BY PIN LUCIO

DICK TRACY BY JOE STATON AND MIKE CLARK

LOVE MOTS BY ELIZABETH HORNGLO

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

KIKO MACHINE BY RYAN ABRERA

SIDS BY DANIEL SHELTON

HUTTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY

DAISY BY STEVE KELLEY AND JEFF PARKER

TULDOG BY RINA COLL

HOROSCOPE

BY RYAN CECIBAR

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs on www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

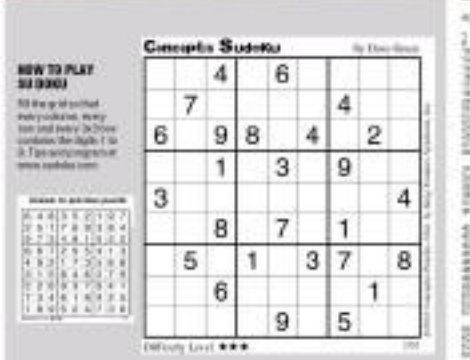
1	4	8	5	9	6	2	3	7
9	7	3	2	1	8	4	6	5
6	5	9	8	7	4	1	2	3
4	2	1	6	3	5	9	7	8
3	9	5	4	2	7	6	8	1
7	8	6	1	5	9	3	4	2
2	6	4	7	8	1	5	9	3
5	1	7	9	6	3	8	5	4
8	3	2	5	4	2	7	1	6

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

		4		6				
	7					4		
6		9	8		4		2	
		1		3		9		
3								4
		8		7		1		
	5		1		3	7		8
		6					1	
				9		5		

Difficulty Level ★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Carmina, Zoren and twins help explain 'SPG' rating for TV shows

By Marinel R. Cruz

CHEER FACTOR

AN EXPOSITIONAL on the most crying system for television, starring actress Zoren Legaspi, Carmina Villaroel and their twins Esmeralda and Maverick, will be aired starting Feb. 9.

Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) Chairman Eric Villa announced on Tuesday that the announcement is in line with the implementation of a new classification rating called Strong Parental Guidance or "SPG."

The newsreel ratings, based on a recent memorandum issued by the country's Director General Consuelo Ynares-Santiago (YS), Parental Guidance (PG), Strong Parental Guidance (SPG), and Unsuitable for Children (UC) and Unsuitable for Children (UC) and Unsuitable for Children (UC)

Creative 'Community,' 'Pawn Stars' 6th season

"COMMUNITY" stellar: Ken Jeong, Danny Pudi, Gillian Jacobs, Joel McHale, Yvette Nicole Brown, Alison Brie, Donald Glover and Chevy Chase

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

COMMUNITY, well-written and with one of the most quotable casts on television, "Community" ice-cream sitcom about a group of lovable misfits attending a community college.

Seven students regularly gather as a Spanish study group, the unexpected result of a ploy hatched by Jeff Winger (Joel McHale), an ex-lawyer who returns to school after his fake degree was exposed. He tries to adapt to his new situation, and quickly finds himself attracted to the hot mamapreneuring blonde, Britta (Gillian Jacobs).

His plan to get acquainted with her by starting a fake study group backfires, attracting students who wish to understand the subject matter. Aside from that, they barely have anything in common.

Forming Jeff's study group are Pierce (Chevy Chase), an insensitive senior citizen; Shirley (Yvette Nicole Brown), a caring single mother; Troy (Donald Glover), a dumb former jock; Abed (Danny Pudi), a quirky pop culture aficionado; Annie (Alison Brie), a freaky overachiever; and Ben, a clean-obsessive health nut.

Jeff eventually becomes the group's leader, the odd bunch deferring to his real-life wisdom despite his oh-so-abrasive personality. They get into familiar college scrapes and dilemmas on issues a lot, but often survive them together like a family.

Created by Dan Harmon, the show riotously tackles campus customs and shenanigans, giving this culturally and racially diverse clique plenty of opportunities to weigh in on matters, and learn from each other.

Ken Jeong and Jim Rash also regularly inspire giggles as the nickelodeony Spanish teacher Senor Chang and the bizarre Dean Pelton, respectively. The first season also has brilliant parodies of "The Hurt" and "Good Will Hunting" (inspired two sorts of its best episodes), as well as memorable guest appearances by Jack Black, Owen Wilson and Lisa Kudrow.

Each member of the group is emotionally and cleverly developed. Pudi's nicely eyebrowless the closest Asian figure, his Jeff Winger character repeatedly finding common ground with, and learning new things from, his eclectic new "family."

("Community" airs weeknights at 8:30 on Fox.)

They're back!

"Pawn Stars," the history-series documentary-reenactment about a family-run pawnshop in Las Vegas, airs Mondays starting Feb. 6 at 10 p.m., with all new back-to-back episodes.

Three generations of men from the Harrisons family—grandfather Richard, son Rick and grandson Corey—jointly run their pawning business, using their sharp-eyed skills to carefully assess the value of items clients bring on.

The all-new season brings the pawn stars ever grass, including seasonal entrepreneurs in 1793 Stradivarius violin and a commodity: $3.66,000 records of the bankruptcy (almost worthless), historical war objects, sports memorabilia, and pointed souvenirs...from a letter signed by Winston Churchill, an Abraham Lincoln campaign ribbon from the 1860 presidential race and a rare 14th-century book documenting the first laws of congress.

"PAWN Stars" stars: Chumlee (in shop's foreground, second from left, with the Harrisons (from right) Richard, Corey and Rick

Kim Chiu not up to vital, challenging task at hand

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

MY WIFE in Hello City last Jan. 30 where "My Binondo Girl" aired its final telecast, but we still made it a point to catch the show, even as the rest of the city's downtown convened in the Binagyang Festival.

With Jolo Revilla's character out of the picture (he had died saving Kim Chiu's character's life), it was likely that Xian Lim would finally get the girl. But would Marlene Gutierrez have a big surprise in store for viewers at the very end?

No such embodiment as the plot happened, so Xian was indeed "it." But, before that must have wedding scene, he did shake up the big finale somewhat when he pleaded for more time to get over the week's traumatic events (after all, his dad had been assaulted at the mansion and the bad coachwoman to which Julia's character had perished).

But that turned out to be a temporary glitch, as Xian's mom pushed him back to Julia's aching arms, in time for them to pledge their troth and bring the whole shebang to a big-bang conclusion.

Disappointing

Looking back, "My Binondo Girl" started months ago with a lot of promise—in starring (Xian, among other things, is supposedly a female empowerment agenda, with Kim rising to the top of the Chinoy business world and running her father's empire in which she had first proved herself by working as a mere functionary and bathroom janitress).

The series did end with lots announced at the top, but the focus on the true empowerment theme was bit lost in a new and upstaged by too many melodramatic plot upheavals during the series' final chapters.

Also disappointing was the

fact that although Kim worked hard throughout the series, her performance still didn't come through as a major screen star. She was in fact passably weak and inconsistent as the company's big boss.

The series was kinder to Xian, who broke through as a genuine find, emerging as a certified star due to his good showing in "My Binondo Girl."

Also on the up and up were the performances of the show's other Chinoy players, who more than held their own in the company of their more experienced Pinoy counterparts in the series' stellar cast.

Another standout was Ricardo Cepeda, who shone brightly as the discreet head cook, when he believably usurped as the story's prime evildoer.

He ended up doing better than the show's other principal villain, Chinoy Pie Pioneller, who—for some reason—was never motivated nasty he could be.

Jolo also benefited from his participation in the show, but Shaina was not flaky and yet underscored this some-off, although as well.

All told, the series' best suit was its sometimes deft, believably detailed depiction of Chinoy life, particularly in its business and tradition-related aspects.

But the universe would have settled upon a more significant success if it had held its focus more rigorously on its female empowerment theme. Unfortunately, despite her best efforts, Kim Chiu wasn't up to the vital and challenging task at hand.